

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
FACULTY OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department of sociology and
human geography

The Geopolitics of ‘Hearts and Minds’:
American Public Diplomacy in the War on Terrorism Era

Master’s Thesis in Human Geography
Spring 2008

Anja Sletteland



Public diplomacy
helped win the Cold War,
and it has the potential
to help win the war on terror.
(Djerejian 2003, 13)

CONTENTS

List of Figures	v
List of Abbreviations	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
1 INTRODUCTION.....	7
1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION	8
1.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS	8
2 CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	10
2.1 WHAT IS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY?.....	10
2.1.1 <i>Public Diplomacy as Strategic Communication</i>	13
2.1.2 <i>Perpetrators of US Public Diplomacy</i>	16
2.2 THE ‘WAR ON TERROR(ISM)’	18
2.3 THE POWER STRUCTURE OF THE WAR ON TERRORISM	20
2.3.1 <i>The Soft Power of Terrorism</i>	21
2.3.2 <i>Public Diplomacy against Terrorism</i>	23
2.4 SUMMARY	24
3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	25
3.1 DISCOURSE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	25
3.1.1 <i>The Social Production of Meaning</i>	26
3.1.2 <i>Relational Discourses</i>	27
3.1.3 <i>The Struggle for Discursive Hegemony</i>	29
3.1.4 <i>Framework for a Differentiated Security- ‘Order of Discourse’-Analysis</i>	31
3.2 GEOPOLITICAL APPROACH	33
3.2.1 <i>The Origin and the Critical Turn</i>	33
3.2.2 <i>Pre-genres and Representations Guide Spatial Practices</i>	34
3.2.2.1 Geopolitical Pre-genres	34
3.2.2.2 Geopolitical Representations	36
3.2.3 <i>Spatial Practices Reproduce the Geopolitical Order</i>	38
3.3 SUMMARY AND OPERATIONALISATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION	40
4 ANALYTICAL APPROACH	42
4.1 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE.....	42
4.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.....	43
4.3 ANALYTICAL STRATEGY AND -PROCESS	45
4.3.1 <i>Analytical Operationalisation</i>	47
4.3.2 <i>Interviews</i>	49
4.3.2.1 Ethical Issues	50
4.4 RESEARCH ASSESSMENT	51
5 THE GEOPOLITICAL RATIONALE	53
5.1 THE GEOPOLITICAL PREMISE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DISCOURSES	55
5.2 THE RULES OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE VARIOUS DISCOURSES.....	60
5.2.1 <i>Marketized Public Diplomacy</i>	61
5.2.2 <i>Politicized Public Diplomacy</i>	62
5.2.3 <i>Securitized public diplomacy</i>	65
5.2.4 <i>The Difficult Coordination Process</i>	67
5.3 DIVERGING DISCOURSES – CLASHING MESSAGES.....	68
5.4 THE RELATIVE POWER OF THE DIVERGING DISCOURSES	71
5.5 THE GEOPOLITICAL RATIONALE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE PDWTE.....	74
6 SHARED VALUES INITIATIVE: CONTROVERSY AND GEOPOLITICAL VISIONS	76
6.1 SVI AS A GEOPOLITICAL COUNTER DISCOURSE	77
6.2 THE GEOPOLITICAL TALES OF THE SVI SPOTS	78
6.2.1 <i>Baker: Relational Identities Based on Religion and Nationality</i>	78
6.2.2 <i>Doctor: Assimilation and Universal Egalitarianism</i>	80

6.2.3	<i>Teacher: Equivalence and Difference</i>	81
6.2.4	<i>Journalist: Shared, Rather Than Imposed, Values</i>	82
6.2.5	<i>Fire fighter: Associated Religion and Collective Guilt</i>	83
6.2.6	<i>Summary</i>	84
6.3	GEOPOLITICAL ALLIANCES IN THE SVI SPOTS	85
6.4	CONTROVERSY REVEALS THE RULES OF THE DISCOURSE	87
6.4.1	<i>The Propaganda Controversy</i>	88
6.4.2	<i>The Message Approval</i>	90
6.5	THE STANDING OF THE SVI IN THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY CULTURE	91
7	CONCLUSIONS	94
	REFERENCES	98
	APPENDICES	102
	List of Informants	103
	Project Proposal for Interviewees	105
	Transcript of the Shared Values Initiative Television Spots	107

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Public diplomacy: The range of definitions	13
Figure 2.2: Subcategories of strategic communication	13
Figure 2.3: Timeline of Public Diplomacy Chiefs at the SD	16
Figure 3.1: The Boundary Between Discourses	28
Figure 3.2: How Meaning and Attitudes Leak between Realms	28
Figure 3.3: Subcategories of Genres	30
Figure 3.4: The Geopolitical Culture (Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998)	35
Figure 5.1: The geopolitical premise of the different discourses	60
Figure 6.1: The Re-mapping of Geopolitical Identities in the SVI	84
Figure 6.2: The Accept and Rejection of the Genre and Message	92
Figure 7.1: Summary of the discursive struggle	94

All figures except 3.4 are my own constructions.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DoD	US Department of Defense
SD	US State Department
IO	Information Operations
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
PDWTE	Public Diplomacy in the War on Terrorism Era
Psy-op	Psychological operations
USIA	US Information Agency
USIS	US Information Service
USAID	US Agency for International Development
9/11	The terrorist attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon on 11 September 2001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of people have contributed to making the work on this thesis an utterly stimulating and fun experience.

I would like to direct a special thanks to Elin Sæther for your invaluable comments and encouragement throughout the working process. I particularly appreciate your valuation of enjoyment as a scientific criterion.

Thanks to Andreas Selliaas for your critical comments and enthusiastic engagement in my project, and for being a good colleague.

I would also like to thank the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the Consortium for Research on Terrorism and International Crime for offering me a scholarship for the last ten months of my study. A special thanks is directed to my colleagues at the Department of International Politics and Tore Bjørge for your remarks on earlier versions of this thesis. Thanks to the librarians at NUPI for your exquisite service.

I have been fortunate to receive financial support for my field trip. With the help from The Freedom of Expression Foundation (Fritt ord), Unifor and Department of sociology and human geography at the University of Oslo, I was able to travel to New York City; Madison, Wisconsin; and Washington, D.C.

A number of people made the field trip a pleasurable experience. Thanks to all my interviewees who have generously offered me your time and perspectives. Thanks to Julia Benedict and Neil Smith at the Center for place, culture and politics at CUNY for taking such good care of me during my stay in New York. Thanks to Inger Stole and Robert McChesney for your inspiring hospitality during my stay in Madison.

Thanks to Vegard Hole for your comments on an earlier version of the thesis. Thanks to Agnar Sletteland for the final proofreading. Thanks to all the people who have discussed public diplomacy, the war on terrorism, American foreign policy and anti-Americanism with me. You are too many to list, but you probably know who you are.

Finally, thanks to all my friends and fellow students for your support and for reminding me of the world external to my head.

New York, 10 February 2008.

Anja Sletteland

1

INTRODUCTION

“Why do they hate us?” President George W. Bush’s question in his address to the Congress on 20 September 2001 reflected the broad post-9/11 discourse of shock and incomprehension. Accompanied by a reinvigoration of public diplomacy to counter the hostility against the US, particularly in Arab and Muslim countries, the phrase has in international media become a symbol of American ignorance. Critical proclamations such as the ironic suggestion that “it’s not the policy that’s the problem, it’s just that we’re misunderstood” have branded public diplomacy as an arrogant strategy for manipulating foreign audiences.

Out in the field and behind the desks of the US State Department (SD), public diplomats face a different reality. Throughout the world, and particularly in Muslim countries, the US’ image is deteriorating. The declining popularity of the US abroad, particularly following the war on terrorism, causes considerable concern about American soft power in general and security in particular. In public diplomacy circles, there is a belief that public diplomacy has the potential to help win the war on terrorism, by reaching out to people who potentially could be influenced by, and inclined to fund, terrorists. However, frustration is breeding among SD public diplomats who feel that their work is being counteracted by another enemy: The US Department of Defense.

Because the war on terrorism has caused a major concern about ‘hearts and minds’, the Department of Defense (DoD) has become increasingly involved in the issue. This has led to a bureaucratic struggle between the SD and the DoD, through which tasks have been shifted and practices have been changed. Public diplomacy has a long tradition from the Cold War, and practitioners have through various debates and practices developed strong norms and ideas about its purpose and target. I will in this thesis analyse how the entrance of the DoD as a perpetrator in this game has changed the public diplomacy discourse since 9/11, in a geopolitical perspective.

The geographical dimensions of public diplomacy are a rather unexplored field in academia, although the practice is fundamentally geopolitical. It represents a tool for influencing strategic audiences in foreign audiences to counter a perceived geopolitical threat. In this thesis, I will analyse how the representation of the geopolitical threat direct different

approaches to public diplomacy, and how this practice has developed since the early days of the war on terrorism.

1.1 Research Question

The main research question of this thesis is “*what is the geopolitical rationale of American public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era?*” A ‘geopolitical rationale’ is a theoretical concept that refers to spatial-political networks of power embedded in reasoning and practices. Implicitly, this means that the thesis adopts a constructivist perspective, which sees the world as made up of socially constructed phenomena. The analytical strategy employed is a discourse analysis with emphasis on the impact of competing discourses on each other and their underlying geopolitical premises.

To explain the geopolitical rationale of public diplomacy, I have differentiated the concept into three interconnected aspects. The first aspect concerns the display of geopolitical representations in public diplomacy activities. As a means of strategic communication, public diplomacy addresses potential threats to and opportunities for the US. Messages developed in this discourse, such as different representations of anti-Americanism, give insight in perceptions of geopolitical power structures embedded in the public diplomacy culture. The second aspect relates to how these representations are manifested in public diplomacy efforts. As the analysis will show, different approaches, often advocated by different institutions, are engaged in a discursive struggle about the rationale of public diplomacy. Much of the confusion and contradictory practices of public diplomacy can be attributed to the fact that diverging geopolitical representations guide the different approaches. This also relates to the third aspect, which is the *output* of the discursive struggle, or how these discourses affect each other and the development of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era. Because the research questions are closely linked to the analytical approach and theoretical framework, they will be further explained and operationalised in chapter three and four.

1.2 The structure of the thesis

The next chapter outlines the context in which the notions, debates and practices discussed in this thesis have emerged. Some of the central concepts of the thesis are highly ambiguous, including core notions such as ‘public diplomacy’ and the ‘war on terrorism’. The notion of ‘public diplomacy’ will be addressed through an outline of the variety of approaches to what public diplomacy is, how it relates to other kinds of strategic communication, and who the involved actors are. The ambiguities of the concept and practice of the ‘war on terrorism’ will also be dealt with here. Finally, the power structure in which public diplomacy is embedded in

the war on terrorism will be addressed, and what kind of power resource the practice constitutes.

Chapter three outlines the theoretical framework of this thesis, which comprises two compound sets of discourse theory and geopolitical theory. The discourse theory and the geopolitical framework respectively constitute two levels of the analytical strategy: the strategy employed to find meaning and the specific kind of meaning that will be analysed. In the end of the chapter, the research question is theoretically operationalised.

Chapter four discusses the philosophical assumptions and analytical strategy of the thesis. A particular concern is how the choices of theories, analytical strategies, research questions and empirical data have affected the direction of the research process and hence the findings and conclusions. The chapter also deals with the motivation and analytical demarcation of the research question.

Chapter five, six and seven constitute the analysis and answer to the research question. In Chapter five, the debates and practices through which public diplomacy has developed in the war on terrorism era are analysed. The chapter starts with how different approaches to public diplomacy construe the geopolitical threat anti-Americanism, and discusses how this premise forms the guidelines for different institutions to engage in public diplomacy. These guidelines, or “rules”, concern what methods and messages are considered appropriate for countering the geopolitical threat. The chapter further analyses the impact the diverging discourses have on each other and on the general practice and development of public diplomacy.

Chapter six analyses a case, the public diplomacy advertising campaign Shared Values Initiative (SVI) from 2002. The campaign was an initiative of the State Department to engage in dialogue with audiences in Muslim countries as an attempt to counter the idea that the war on terrorism is a war on Muslims. Central to the analysis here is how the campaign communicates geopolitical visions, particularly in how it represents the relationship between Americans and Muslims, and the campaign’s standing among public diplomats.

Chapter seven concludes the analytical findings of the thesis. Finally, three appendices are attached: a list of informants, the project proposal sent to the interviewees, and a transcription of the SVI campaign.

2

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

The term ‘public diplomacy’ was first used in 1965 with the establishment of the Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy. Until then, the concept was known as ‘propaganda’¹, for which the term public diplomacy originated as a euphemism. However, this definition is somewhat dated, as the current trend of public diplomacy involves much more and sensitive practitioners reject the use of propaganda in favour of cross-cultural learning and dialogue. Since the beginning of the Cold War, public diplomacy has been a central tool for promoting the US and American interests abroad. Following the terrorist attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon on 11 September 2001 (9/11), public diplomacy has been reinvigorated as an integrated strategy of the war on terrorism.

In this chapter, I will discuss the context in which the notions, debates and practices discussed in this thesis have emerged. A central notion is ‘public diplomacy’, whose very definition is a matter of substantial debate. I will discuss the variety of approaches to what public diplomacy is, how it relates to other kinds of strategic communication, and who the involved actors are. Another central notion is the ‘war on terrorism’, which involves ambiguities both as a concept and in practice. Finally, I will discuss what kind of power resource public diplomacy constitutes, and the power structure in which it is embedded in the war on terrorism.

2.1 What Is Public Diplomacy?

Many efforts have been made to define public diplomacy, often with different ideological implications and strong preferences involved. Because public diplomacy is a field of controversy, questions about the concept’s definition, ethics and effectiveness have been substantially debated. Different public diplomats advocate a variety of approaches as the *real* public diplomacy, distinguished from *bad* or *quasi*-public diplomacy. Because the notion tends to be used changeably, I will define public diplomacy broadly in this thesis, and discuss the variety of approaches to what public diplomacy is and what it is not.

While traditional diplomacy is communicated between national governments, public diplomacy is directed towards foreign publics. A common definition singles out the national

¹ <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm>

government as the perpetrator, such as that of the Dictionary of International Relations Terms: “Public diplomacy refers to government-sponsored programs intended to inform or influence public opinion in other countries; its chief instruments are publications, motion pictures, cultural exchanges, radio and television” (U.S. Department of State, 1987, 85). According to this definition, ‘public diplomacy’ labels government-sponsored activities with a certain *intention*. Other activities that can be included in this kind of definition are educational exchanges like the Fulbright programme; embassy press briefings; official websites in local languages; sports diplomacy, and to some extent international aid programmes like US Agency for International Development (USAID); Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), and National Endowment for Democracy (NED). However, many of these efforts have multifaceted intentions and are not specifically designed as public diplomacy.

According to some definitions, the role of the government is downplayed to highlight the increasing involvement of informal actors in activities with the same intentions and instruments. US Information Agency (USIA), the main coordinator of public diplomacy programs until it was abolished in 1999, used the following definition:

Public diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest and the national security of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.²

This definition does not suggest any specific agent, but it is similar to the former in the sense that it places the emphasis on the intention.

It is frequently argued that the ultimate objective of public diplomacy is to improve the public opinion, or “move the needle” (Djerejian 2003). According to this approach, public diplomacy is not simply about delivering a message; it is about getting a result (Leonard 2002). Rather than focusing on its intention, this approach emphasises the *function* of public diplomacy as a strategic and tactical tool. When focusing on its ability to improve a public opinion, what becomes apparent is that public diplomacy has reactive, tactical and strategic dimensions with different time frames and different impact.

Foreign policy actions and formulations have according to this approach a short-term impact, because it gives an immediate response. Government sponsored communications (such as radio, television, websites and publications) have a cumulative medium-term impact of creating understanding, appreciation or acceptance of American culture and foreign policy.

² <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm>

Long-term investments such as educational and cultural exchanges can have an impact over time: the people involved can become local “ambassadors” for the US in their respective countries. A prime target for Fulbright exchanges, for example, is elite students, or “future state leaders”, which prospectively can have an impact on their respective countries’ foreign policies.

What the influence entails, however, is not always clear, and is utterly hard to measure. A historical parallel is Cold War public diplomacy, which demonstrates the historical success of the concept. Throughout the Cold War, institutions such as USIA and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were central in executing what in the CIA was known as the “Marshall plan for the mind” (Saunders 2001). The success of the concept in Europe during the Cold War is indisputable: Public diplomacy was central for building an image of the US as a leader despite its (in Western Europe) disrespected “cowboy” reputation; creating the mythology of America, capitalism and consumerism; establishing emotional ties and loyalty to the US and American companies; and normalising American perspectives, archetypes and communication norms (Saunders 2001). Among public diplomacy people, there is a broad agreement that public diplomacy helped win the Cold War, both by serving as a Trojan horse in Communist societies and by attracting allies in Western Europe. The attraction relates to a core notion in the vocabulary of public diplomacy, ‘hearts and minds’. This notion describes well what the influence of public diplomacy entails: it relates not only to people’s opinions, but also to their sentiment through which opinions often are formed. In other words, the influence of public diplomacy is complex, often indirect and sometimes imperceptible.

Finally, public diplomacy is sometimes also defined through its *effect*, which to a less extent takes the perpetrator, means or strategic intention into account. A State Department official argued that, “Everything we do has a public diplomacy component; everything we do has a weight in the public arena” (Fernandez, interview 28.2.2007). The most effective examples of public diplomacy lately, he argued, have been the prison camps Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, because they contribute to consolidating a strong image of the US abroad, albeit unintended and negative. When public diplomacy is defined outside of its formal or intentional bounds, it also becomes apparent that other transnational communication can have the desired public diplomacy effect: “With YouTube etc., public diplomacy has expanded beyond states, and is increasingly something going on from publics to publics, building relationships between people” (Snow, interview 8.3.2007).

The new information environment is currently a central concern for public diplomats. It has become increasingly difficult to control and influence media and compete for attention. In this context, when regarded independently of its previous successes, public diplomacy can appear somewhat desperate in the war on terrorism. However, public diplomacy has received increased attention in the previous years, and an increasing number of countries have started to engage in equivalent activities.

Public diplomacy is a floating term used differently by each speaker and often variably throughout a conversation. The different approaches to and definitions of public diplomacy range from focusing on its *intention*, through its *function* to the *effect*. These are not mutually excluding, but have a differing focus. Elements that are incorporated in the diverging approaches can be sorted accordingly:

Perpetrator, Instruments, Strategic impact, Hearts and minds, Reputation, Cultural ties		
Intention	Function	Effect

Figure 2.1: Public diplomacy: The range of definitions

As the figure shows, the elements are often overlapping, though they have a different implication for each approach. Where the intention-approach defines public diplomacy through its perpetrator or its means for accomplishing its purpose, the function-approach emphasizes the link between the intention and strategic impact. The effect-approach is less typical and includes unintended expressions in its definition of public diplomacy. In this thesis, I will define the concept broadly, but in accordance with the research question; I will focus only on the rationale of formal, governmental public diplomacy, and not on its effect.

2.1.1 Public Diplomacy as Strategic Communication

Public diplomacy is often distinguished from or compared to strategic communication, public affairs, propaganda, psychological operations (psy-ops) and spin. These concepts can be structured in the following analytical subcategories, which by no means are exhaustive:

Strategic communication		
Public affairs	Public diplomacy	Information Operations
	Spin	
	Propaganda	Psy-ops
	White, Grey, Black	
	Advertising, Public relations	

Figure 2.2: Subcategories of strategic communication

Strategic communication originated as the military counterpart to public diplomacy, but has in the recent years become the coordinating principle of public diplomacy, public affairs and information operations.³ It emerged as a major focus for transformation of the Department of Defense (DoD) as a result of a 2004 Defense Science Board study. According to the study, strategic communication refers to

“a variety of instruments used by governments for generations to *understand* global attitudes and cultures, *engage* in a dialogue of ideas between people and institutions, *advise* policymakers, diplomats, and military leaders on the public opinion implications of policy choices, and *influence* attitudes and behavior through communications strategies” (Defense Science Board 2004, 11; emphasis in original).

The purpose of strategic communication, according to the study, is to “help to shape context and build relationships that enhance the achievement of political, economic, and military objectives” (*Ibid*).

The US State Department formally distinguishes between public diplomacy and *public affairs* due to the US Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 (Public Law 402), popularly referred to as the Smith-Mundt Act. Public affairs refer to “the provision of information to the public, press and other institutions concerning the goals, policies and activities of the US government” (Jansen 2005, 52). The target audience can thus be domestic, while that of public diplomacy is foreign. Moreover, the Act also prohibits domestic distribution of information intended for foreign audiences. The intention of the formal division between public affairs and public diplomacy was to produce barriers against information control of national narratives, or in a more common formulation: to prohibit the government from propagandizing the American public.

Information operation (IO) is a term used by the DoD to include Psy-ops, Computer Network Operations, Electronic Warfare, Operational Security and Military Deception. Psy-ops sometimes resemble public diplomacy: it refers to “military activities that use selected information and indicators to influence the attitudes and behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in support of military and national security objectives” (Defense Science Board 13, 2004). A difference between psy-ops and public diplomacy is the formers uninhibited use of deception.

Spin is sometimes used in all kinds of strategic communication, and is a “coordinated strategy to minimize negative information and present in a favourable light a story that is

³ The notion of strategic communication originated as a military term, but since it diffused into the corporate world relating to communication with a clear purpose, it has often been chiefly associated with the private sector.

damaging” (Jowett & O’Donnell 1999, 3). Different rules apply to the use of spin in public diplomacy and psy-ops, because public diplomacy usually operates within a longer time frame and hence needs to build credibility. The same rules apply to the respective strategies’ use of *propaganda*.

Governmental propaganda is a delicate issue in many countries, including the US. Propaganda can be defined as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (Jowett & O’Donnell 1999, 6). The leading propaganda scholars Jowett and O’Donnell further divide the concept in the subcategories white, black, and grey propaganda. *White* propaganda usually communicates accurate information, and the source is defined correctly. It attempts to “build credibility with the audience, for this could have usefulness at some point in the future” (*Ibid*, 12). *Black* propaganda spreads lies, fabrications and deceptions, and is credited to a false source. *Grey* propaganda is somewhere between white and black propaganda: “The source may or may not be correctly identified, and the accuracy of the information is uncertain” (*Ibid*, 15). It is sometimes argued that public diplomacy can be white or grey propaganda, but never black (Romarheim 2005). However, as the initial discussion indicates: this depends on the definition of public diplomacy and its purpose. Black propaganda is known to be undermining in the long term, but propaganda-sensitive societies sometimes react negatively on white and grey propaganda as well. The association with propaganda is regarded as a problem for public diplomacy in general, because of its connotation to mind-control, deception and cultural imperialism.

Strategic communication, public affairs, information operations, psy-ops, spin and propaganda constitute the exterior against which public diplomacy often is defined. A final set of notions rarely associated with this conceptual package is two genres of public diplomacy: advertising and public relations. Although these can be seen as kinds of propaganda, they are often not perceived as such and hence their placement in the figure is somewhat problematic. The differences between advertising and public relations relate respectively to whether it is paid or free publicity, whether the source is known as an advertiser or goes through a third-party source, whether it goes through the closed advertising sphere or the news media, and whether the message is framed for the target audience or the media. In some cases, public relations campaigns open for two-ways communications, contrary to advertising, and are perceived as more credible, even though the use of third party (‘deflective’) sources can be understood as grey propaganda. These two approaches have through their different advocates marked a shift in the public diplomacy discourse in the war on terrorism era.

2.1.2 Perpetrators of US Public Diplomacy

Who the agents of public diplomacy are, is also a matter of how the concept is defined. In the broadest sense, anyone that, in one way or another, shapes the foreign public opinion about the US can be a public diplomat: American firms and tourists abroad, internationally broadcasted television shows, etc. When such unintended public diplomacy is defined out, a number of institutions remain. The private sector performs a large amount of activities that resemble public diplomacy, although the primary purpose usually is to strengthen the reputation of the firm rather than that of the US. Likewise, a number of governmental institutions such as Department of Commerce, Department of Energy, Department of Justice, etc. are a large source of information abroad. However, some institutions are designated to perform public diplomacy tasks with the specific purpose of improving the public opinion about the US abroad.

Until 1999, the main coordinating institution of public diplomacy was the US Information Agency (USIA). For the purpose of administrative streamlining and bringing public diplomacy closer to policy formulation, USIA was disbanded and its tasks split between the State Department and Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). While BBG became independently responsible for all governmental and government sponsored, non-military international broadcasting, exchange- and information programs were transferred to the SD. BBG is responsible for two of the most “attention-grabbing” efforts in the war on terrorism era, Radio *Sawa* (Together) from March 2002, and the satellite TV channel *Al-Hurra* (The Free One) from early 2004. These still broadcast in the Middle East.

In the SD, public diplomacy is headed by the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, and the tasks split between the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Bureau of International Information Programs. A third bureau, the Bureau of Public Affairs, coordinates strategic communication with bureaus throughout the SD, the White House, and other agencies dealing with foreign affairs, such as the Department of Defense (DoD). So far in the war on terrorism era, the position as Under Secretary has been occupied by three different persons, as visualised on the figure:

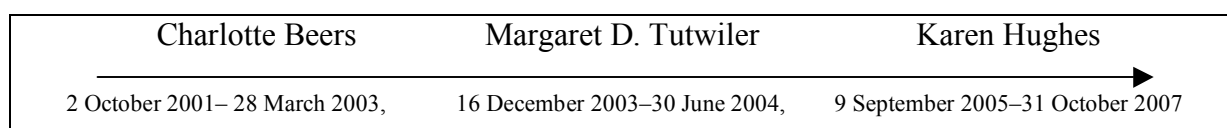


Figure 2.3: Timeline of Public Diplomacy Chiefs at the SD

The first, Charlotte Beers, was sworn in on 2 October 2001, nine months after the inauguration of President George W. Bush. Foreign public opinion and public diplomacy were not high on the Bush administration's agenda until the terrorist attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon on 11 September 2001 (9/11), but the terror attacks made the US' declining popularity abroad an emergency issue.

Beers is a former advertising executive and had worked with then Secretary of State Colin Powell on an earlier occasion. Although Beers' methods were varied and incorporated elements from traditional public diplomacy, she became rather infamous for introducing advertising as a public diplomacy strategy. Her main project was the controversial Shared Value Initiative in 2002, which is undoubtedly the most debated public diplomacy effort in the war on terrorism era. Already in March 2003, she resigned and the position remained vacant until former ambassador to Morocco Margaret Tutwiler was sworn in on 16 December 2003. Tutwiler only lasted in the position for six months and did not seem to bring about much change in the State Department. After she resigned in June 2004, the position was again left vacant for more than a year until President Bush's former communication advisor Karen Hughes was appointed as the new Under Secretary in September 2005. Hughes is a public relations expert, and throughout her period until she resigned in October 2007, she focused on process issues in the public diplomacy structure and less controversial efforts. I will analyse the approaches of the respective Under Secretaries Charlotte Beers and Karen Hughes in chapter 5.

Public diplomacy has developed as a concept through decades, and produced a discourse shaped by traditions, norms and debates. Because some of the current public diplomats are new in the game and operate outside the traditional public diplomacy sphere, these are less affected by this discourse. Those who partake in the discourse, are practitioners in the field and in the SD, critics, bloggers, members of the USIA Alumni Association, etc., and in this thesis, they will be referred to as the 'public diplomacy culture'.

In the recent years, the DoD has emerged as a public diplomacy perpetrator, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq, DoD established the Iraqi Media Network, which comprises *Al Iraqiya* television network, the *Al Sabah* newspaper, and a radio network. As previously mentioned, the Defense Science Board study of 2004 emphasised the importance of coordinating public diplomacy, public affairs and open international military information. This study has contributed to an increased involvement of the DoD in strategic communication.

The DoD has also outsourced a number of public diplomacy- and other information activities to private communications agencies, such as the Rendon Group and the Lincoln Group. Rendon Group is a secretive public relations firm that has assisted a number of DoD and CIA operations. Its activities include organizing the Iraqi National Congress, a PR front group designed to encourage the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and it was central in the famous toppling of the Hussein statue on 9 April 2003.⁴ The Lincoln group, formerly known as Iraqex, was formed to pursue private sector opportunities in Iraq. According to their website, the Lincoln Group “brings a unique combination of expertise in collecting and exploiting information; structuring transactions; and mitigating risks through due diligence and legal strategies”.⁵ It is hired by the DoD to perform public relations, and has become known particularly for its practice of paying local journalists and editors for media coverage.

Finally, a number of public diplomacy perpetrators exist in the private sector, although companies usually focus mainly on their own competitiveness and only secondarily on that of the US. An exception is Business for Diplomatic Action, a non-profit task force that guides multinational companies on communication and perception issues. Their mission is to “enlist the U.S. business community in actions to improve the standing of America in the world with the goal of once again, seeing America admired as a global leader and respected as a courier of progress and prosperity for all people”.⁶

The variety of perpetrators of public diplomacy that have emerged in the war on terrorism era indicates a broad acknowledgement that foreign public opinion about the US has consequences for American economy and security. This increased focus also indicates that public diplomacy is perceived as a relevant tool in the *war on terrorism*, which is another central notion of this thesis.

2.2 The ‘War on Terror(ism)’

On September 20th, 2001, President George W. Bush formally declared war on terror during an address to a joint session of congress and the American people by saying, “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated” (Bush, 20 September 2001). Since then, the notions ‘war on terror’ and ‘war on terrorism’ have been simultaneously widely established and criticized. The very notions are inherently problematic. I will here briefly discuss some problems with the notions and how the Bush administration has related to them.

⁴ http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Rendon_Group#Afghanistan

⁵ <http://www.lincolngroup.com>

⁶ <http://www.businessfordiplomaticaction.org/who/index.html>

The ‘war on terrorism’ is frequently used as an umbrella term for *actions* taken as a reaction to 9/11, which the US was a major force but far from sole perpetrator of. It can also be regarded as a *doctrine* enabling various measures for a common objective, to contain a certain terrorist threat. The terms ‘war on terrorism’ and ‘war on terror’ have been used interchangeably by the Bush administration and others. The difference between the two terms seems in this context to be larger in theory than in practice. Terrorism, according to Louise Richardson, means “deliberately and violently targeting civilians for political purposes” (Richardson 2006, 20). Terror, on the other hand, is a broader term, referring variably to the feeling of intense fear and the person or situation causing it. But ‘terror’ is also British and American slang for terrorism. In practice, the Bush administration does not seem to make an actual difference between the two. The actions taken under the labels ‘war on terror(ism)’ relate to a specific kind of terrorism of global reach rather than terror or even terrorism in general, which means that both terms are too broad to accurately describe the designated doctrine and actions. A conceptual problem with the term ‘war on terror(ism)’ is its oxymoronic character, a source of much ridicule throughout the world. Terrorism is not a group, not an ideology, but a *tactic*. A war on a tactic, without a defined enemy, signifies no ending, and an endless undefined war is regarded by many as a state of terror.

Many of the US’ actions against the terrorist threat have clear associations to war. The operations ‘Enduring Freedom’ in Afghanistan and ‘Iraqi Freedom’ in Iraq fought under the label ‘war on terrorism’ have indeed been war operations. However, the American war on terrorism involves more than a war. The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism from February 2003 states that,

“The struggle against international terrorism is different from any other war in our history. We will not triumph solely or even primarily through military might. We must fight terrorist networks, and all those who support their efforts to spread fear around the world, using every instrument of national power – diplomatic, economic, law enforcement, financial, information, intelligence, and military” (Bush 2003, 1).

To succeed, according to the National Strategy (Bush 2003, 29), all the elements of national power must be utilised to confront four fronts. The overall strategy is to

1. Defeat terrorists and their organizations of global reach through relentless action.
2. Deny terrorists the sponsorship, support and sanctuary they need to survive.
3. Win the war of ideas and diminish the underlying conditions that promote the despair and the destructive visions of political change that lead people to embrace, rather than shun, terrorism.
4. Defend U.S. citizens and interests at home and abroad.

In other words, the war on terrorism involves much more than a war and cannot be understood only in the terms of a war. The third point is subject for this thesis.

Since President George W. Bush started using the term ‘war on terror’ shortly after 9/11, it has been target of much criticism. After Karen Hughes came into office in 2005, the Bush administration tried to change the slogan (Schmitt & Schanker 2005). Then Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld referred in his later speeches to ‘global struggle against violent extremism’ rather than ‘war on terror’ (*Ibid*). Since 2006, the slogan of choice in the Bush administration has been ‘the long war’. President George W. Bush himself first used the new name in his 2006 State of the Union speech: “Our own generation is in a long war against a determined enemy” (Bush, 31 January 2006). None of these phrases have established in the war on terrorism discourse. Despite of these efforts, the term ‘war on terror’ is still in widespread use. While the State Department uses the term ‘counterterrorism’ on its webpage, the Department of Defense is still using ‘war on terror’.

In this thesis, I will continue to use the term ‘war on terrorism’ despite of its inaccuracy, for two reasons. Firstly, the “war on terrorism” is the most established of the terms. Secondly, notions like the ‘long war’ refer to the military actions and hence are not wide enough a term for my purpose. It would make little sense to talk about the role of public diplomacy in ‘the long war’. The ‘war on terrorism’ is used as an umbrella term and refers to political and legal as well as military actions. It grasps the purpose of the struggle, to contain terrorism, which is the logical link between the other actions and public diplomacy. Before I turn to what kind of weapon public diplomacy constitutes in the war on terrorism, I will discuss the role of this practice in a broader power structure.

2.3 The Power Structure of the War on Terrorism

In the war on terrorism, public diplomacy is a part of a broader network of power. Joseph S. Nye Jr. (2004) describes the space for agency in international issues with the metaphor ‘three-dimensional chess game of world politics’. In this game, one can win “only by playing vertically as well as horizontally” (Nye 2004, 4). The top of the board represents classic interstate military issues, where the United States is the only superpower with global military reach. At this level, the distribution of power can be understood in traditional terms of unipolarity or hegemony. The middle board represents interstate economic issues; and at this level, the distribution of power is multipolar and requires cooperation between different actors for desired outcomes to be obtained. The bottom board represents transnational issues like terrorism, international crime, climate change, and the spread of infectious diseases. At this

level, Nye argues, “power is widely distributed and chaotically organized among state and nonstate actors” (Nye 2004, 4). The new challenge of international terrorism affects the space for American power at each of the three levels.

Nye argues that the distribution of power resources in the information age varies greatly on different issues. Influence can be achieved in different ways: coercion with threats; payments; or attraction and co-optation of people’s preferences. The last means is what Nye calls *soft power*, a term he first coined in 1990 in the book *Bound to Lead*, when he disputed the idea that the American hegemony was in decline. Soft power is “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments” (Nye 2004, x). Attraction is a substantial power resource because it shapes the preferences of others. However, the effect of soft power is far less tangible than hard power, creating general influence rather than producing an easily observable specific action. The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources that produce such attraction: “its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to it at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)” (Nye 2004, 11). Public diplomacy can be both a soft power resource and a tool for communicating attractive power.

The term ‘soft power’ does not relate consistently to the metaphorical chessboard. Nye categorizes power in three dimensions as ‘military, economic and soft’, but also stresses the ‘soft’ dimensions of military and economic issues. Hard and soft powers can sometimes reinforce each other, and sometimes interfere (Nye 2004, 25). Especially post-industrial democracies demand legitimacy of warfare, which affects the role of military power, and war affects the trust necessary for the flows of capital in a globalised economy. Likewise, issues like terrorism have economic and military aspects, but the success of these resources, for both terrorists and counterterrorist practices, depends on soft power.

2.3.1 The Soft Power of Terrorism

In the three-dimensional game, Nye argues, “you will lose if you focus only on one board and fail to notice the other boards and the vertical connections among them” (Nye 2004, 137). He exemplifies this with the military actions in the war on terrorism on the top board of the chessboard, which simultaneously on the bottom board increased the ability of the Al Qaeda network to recruit more members. The bottom board requires a different set of resources where military and economic resources are insufficient. This relates to Telhami’s (2002) distinction between the supply- and the demand sides of terrorism. Telhami argues that the US has pursued a ‘supply side-only’ approach by “regarding terrorism as the product of

organized groups that could be confronted and destroyed, without regard to their aims or to the reasons that they succeed in recruiting many willing members” (Telhami 2002, 13). Targeting the demand side is equally important for the terrorism phenomenon to be contained, because suppliers will continue to arise to exploit the persistent demand.

The war on terrorism is not conducted against terrorists in general, but against a specific kind of terrorism with a global reach rooted in a radical Islamist movement. Muslims, however, have historically not been a group associated with terrorism. Due to their reputation of accepting problems as “God’s will”, Muslims have been regarded as a rather predictable and favourable business partner (Telhami 2002). Likewise, the United States was not very high on jihadis’ lists of targets throughout the Cold War and until mid-1990s. American foreign policy and political Islam rather aligned in a marriage of convenience to prevent the further expansion of Communism and radical secularism (Gerges 2005). Since 9/11, Gerges argues, relations between the United States and Islamists have been portrayed as having always been on a collision course and fated to a military clash (*Ibid*, 70). Because this idea has become established, it has guided several geopolitical practices under the label ‘war on terrorism’. Gerges argues that the Bush administration through rhetoric and actions has played into Al Qaeda’s hands by lashing out militarily against the *ummah* (the Muslim community worldwide).

The three-dimensional chess game is an appropriate metaphor also for Al Qaeda’s power resources: it depends on soft power for financial support and recruitment of warriors. Al Qaeda only represents a tiny minority among jihadis, jihadis only a tiny minority among Islamists, and because it is widely rejected by the *ummah*, the mobilizing potential is meagre. In order to mobilise support, Al Qaeda employed a strategy of winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the *ummah* by portraying them in an alliance against a common enemy. They adopted the slogan of “liberating the *ummah* of its foreign enemies” and portrayed it “as a battle between Islam and kufr [impiety] and kufar [infidels]” (Gerges 2005, 26, brackets in original). The 9/11 attacks were according to Fawaz Gerges an act of desperation that aimed to save the crippling jihadist movement by precipitating a ‘clash of civilizations’ with the West that would bring the *ummah* into the battle on the jihadist side. When measured by this standard, the 9/11 attacks were an utter failure: Islamic opinion after the 9/11 attacks was almost universally critical of Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Nevertheless, the ‘clash’-discourse has been mirrored by the West, and is a source of the discursive struggle about public diplomacy in the war on terrorism. As I will discuss in part 2 of this thesis, there is a concern that the representations of natural enemies and clash of civilizations have both increased the terror

threat and contributed to the general decline of American soft power. An aspiration of American public diplomacy efforts has been to deconstruct the representation of enemies and reconstruct new alliances. This aspiration has culminated in a variety of expressions.

2.3.2 Public Diplomacy against Terrorism

A source of much ridicule in international press since 9/11 is the idea that public diplomacy is supposed to “fix it all”, often expressed as “to know us is to love us”, or that simple persuasive efforts are supposed to turn terrorists into friends. However, there does not seem to be a customary belief in public diplomacy circles that the threat of terrorism can solely be countered with public diplomacy. It is rather regarded as a tool for (re-)framing the image of the US’ culture and policy that together with other actions can turn the unfavourable public opinion. Much frustration in public diplomacy circles is vented towards military and political actions in the war on terrorism that are perceived to interfere with rather than reinforce American soft power.

The target audience of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism is not the terrorists, but the people they might influence. In order to succeed, terrorist organisations need to recruit willing members, raise funds, and appeal to public opinion in pursuit of their political objectives. Public diplomacy efforts are designed to reach the same public opinion ahead of a potential radicalisation, and create an understanding or acceptance for the American point of view. But even though 9/11 was the catalyst that brought public diplomacy back on the agenda, only a small amount of public diplomacy efforts in the war on terrorism era have been specifically designated to counter terrorism, and those who are, usually have a broader purpose.

A rare example of a public diplomacy effort directly targeted to counter terrorism is Charlotte Beers’ 2001 revival of the SD communication program Rewards for Justice, which started running already in 1984. The program includes a website (www.rewardsforjustice.net), posters and leaflets. Prior to Beers’ involvement, Rewards for Justice looked like *Wanted*-posters, featuring mug shots of terrorists with biographical data and information about how to call in tips and collect awards. Beers recommended that the campaign should be directed towards those who are most likely to have information about terrorists and turn them in, which according to her panel of counter-terrorist experts were women. Based on that recommendation, the posters were replaced with subtle ads that should appeal to the desire for safety, such as one ad featuring the headline “Can a woman stop terrorism?” (Fullerton and

Kendrick 2006, 82). This campaign is an overt attempt to make an alliance with Muslim women against terrorists.

Most public diplomacy efforts, however, are more indirectly targeted to countering terrorism. The Shared Values Initiative (SVI), which will be analysed in chapter 6, is an example of such. It aims to reach out to the critical middle by claiming that Muslims and Americans live in peaceful coexistence, but does not explicitly state that it is an effort against terrorism.

2.4 Summary

This thesis rests upon several ambiguous concepts, including core notions such as ‘public diplomacy’ and the ‘war on terrorism’. Public diplomacy has many competing definitions, which I have sorted on a continuum from its *intention*, through its *function* to its *effect*. The concept is often defined in relation or negation to traditional diplomacy on the one hand, and strategic communication, public affairs, psy-ops, propaganda and spin on the other. Various agents perform public diplomacy tasks, of which a few are specially designated to improve the public opinion of strategic audiences in the war on terrorism: The SD, BBG and DoD. In addition, the DoD has outsourced some public diplomacy tasks to private communications agencies, and businesses are becoming increasingly involved in similar activities. Public diplomacy has become reinvigorated as a coordinated strategy in the war on terrorism. Its role in this strategy is to enhance the soft power of the US and win the hearts and minds of the critical middle that potentially could be persuaded by terrorist motives. Most public diplomacy efforts, however, are designed with compound intentions and do not explicate their role in the war on terrorism.

3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical purpose of this thesis is to find out how geopolitical reasoning direct public diplomacy practices and messages in the war on terrorism era. Such an analysis is about how meaning is produced, reproduced and changed, and not to assess the legitimacy or truthfulness of any claims of reality. Discourse analysis is suited for this purpose because it seeks to find the systems through which the world appears as meaningful to subjects. This thesis draws from the terms and concepts from different discourse theories. A moot point among discourse theorists relates to whether different approaches with diverging methodological foundations can be mixed. I follow Jørgensen and Phillips' (1999) stance on this issue: different approaches can profitably be combined according to the subject matter, because it enables the analysis to grasp different aspects of a discourse.

As the aim is to find a specific kind of meaning, a *geopolitical rationale*, the discourse analysis is supplied with Security analysis and geopolitical theory. The discourse theory and the geopolitical framework constitute the two levels of the analytical strategy: respectively the strategy employed to find meaning and the specific kind of meaning that will be analysed. Although the Security analysis is something between these categories, it will be incorporated in the discourse theory due to its function in the theoretical framework.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: First, I will present the discourse theory, then the geopolitical framework, and finally, I will theoretically operationalise the research question based on the discussed theory.

3.1 Discourse Theoretical Framework

In the first part of the theory chapter, I will outline a framework for explaining how meaning is produced and changed through exchanges of different discourses. The theoretical framework draws from as different scholars as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985; 2001), Norman Fairclough (2003), Katherine R. Young (1987), Mikhail Bakhtin [1963] and the Copenhagen School of Security analysis (Buzan et al, 1998). The theoretical aspiration is to compose a framework that can explain different levels of discourses, from implicit representations to hierarchies between discourses. I will discuss how production of meaning occurs; how different discourses influence each other; how discourses are limited and

changed; and finally, how the rules of the discourse depend on how political issues are framed. In order to outline a coherent theoretical framework, I will theoretically “translate” some concepts.

3.1.1 The Social Production of Meaning

Laclau and Mouffes’ discourse theory builds on an understanding of language that derives from structuralism, post-structuralism and structural Marxism. The theory comprises epistemological and ontological reflections as well as a toolbox of notions that can be used for discourse analysis. To begin at an abstract level, the theory explains how the social production of meaning occurs.

Laclau and Mouffe combine the Gramscian theory of hegemony with semiotic terms to explain how discourses arise. In abstract terms, the discourse is established when meaning crystallises around certain *nodal points* (Laclau and Mouffe 2001, xi). Nodal points are *floating signifiers*, which means they have different meanings in other discourses. These signifiers have no predetermined meaning: they attain their meaning in co-articulation with other signs. Depending on the discourse, an articulation constructs the relation between signs, which are categorised with the semiotic terms *moments* and *elements*. A moment is a sign (a word, phrase, practice, etc.) with a fixed meaning in the discourse, while an element has an undetermined meaning. At some level, every articulation in a discourse tries to turn elements into moments, or in other words, to define something: to distinguish *what it is* from *what it is not* (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). Because all articulations continuously challenge or reproduce discourses, discourses are constantly changing. The understanding of meaning to the Structuralist tradition can be explained with an allegory of a fishnet (Jørgensen and Philips 1999). In the fishnet all the signs can be understood as nodes, which attain meaning by being different from each other and localised on specific places of the net. Laclau and Mouffe follow Jacques Derrida’s critique of this allegory. Derrida, followed by the Post-Structuralist tradition, acknowledged that the signs attain meaning through their reciprocal difference, but in a different sense than to the Structuralist tradition. In practice, signs are placed in varying relations to each other (‘differential positions’), and thereby, attain different connotations. In Laclau and Mouffes’ discourse theory, the social production of meaning is about fixing the floating signifiers, *as if* there was an objective fishnet structure (Jørgensen and Philips 1999, 35).

All other possible meanings that the discourse excludes constitute what Laclau and Mouffe call *the field of discursivity*. Because a sign attains meaning from other signs, it

excludes other meanings. In cases where it does not attain meaning from its difference from other signs, but stands unchallenged as the only signifier, Laclau and Mouffe call it a *hegemonic* discourse. A hegemonic discourse consists of elements that are made into moments by a discursive closure. In practice, this means that a discourse is perceived to be *objective*. But in the terms of the discourse theory, hegemony is impossible in the end, because all determinacy of meaning is *contingent*: possible, but not necessary (Jørgensen and Philips 1999, 61). The overall aim of Laclau and Mouffes discourse analysis is to map *discursive struggle*: the processes in which the fixation of meaning is negotiated, and where meaning becomes so conventionalised that we perceive it as natural (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). An articulation actively formed to intervene in the discursive struggle against a perceived hegemonic or dominating discourse will in this thesis be called a *counter discourse*.

Because the discourse theory explains only what is given meaning and distinguishes sharply between discourse and the field of discursivity, it offers no notions about how discourses are influenced by excluded discourses. Sentiment or attitudes towards a discourse cannot be explained by the discourse analysis unless they are expressed in another discourse. To explain the relation between discourses, I will supply the theoretical framework with perspectives from Bakhtin and Young.

3.1.2 Relational Discourses

Discourses can be analysed on many levels. *Polyphony* is Greek for “many voices” and in Bakhtin’s concept it refers to the existence of many discourses in one and the same. What is characteristic for polyphonic articulations is their double focus: they focus at the same time on its own content as some other discursive context. Bakhtin distinguishes between three kinds of polyphonic articulations. The first kind is about imitation: articulations that imitate or copy the style of previous articulations. For the second kind, parody is typical. In parody, two intentions collide and the new voice forces the first to serve other purposes than intended. Common for these two polyphonic articulations is the passive role of the other voice: it is defenceless in somebody else’s discourse. In the third kind, there is an active connection between the discourses. It comprises all kinds of articulations that are affected by the awareness of other’s discourse. The other’s discourse is not reproduced, but it affects the discourse of the speaker while it stays outside its boundaries (Børtnes 1999)⁷. Bakhtin’s notion of polyphony gives a more substantial insight in parallel discourses than Laclau and Mouffes’ notion of the field of discursivity does, because it takes into account that a discourse

⁷ <http://www.hum.au.dk/romansk/polyfoni/Tribune9/borstnestrib.htm>

can be included and excluded at the same time. Polyphony admits to the influence of excluded discourses, even when they only exist in the awareness of the speaker without being articulated.

Young (1987) draws from a phenomenological perspective and writes about told stories, or more specific, about the Brits' telling of good stories, but some of her notions are useful also for analysing the relationship between discourses and meta- or counter discourses. She draws a boundary between the *Storyrealm* and the *Taleworld* to emphasize the impact of context for every story. This boundary locates the literal or physical border between discourses. In the Taleworld, the tale that is told, persons and events follow their own ontological conventions. The Storyrealm is where the tale is told and framed.

Storyrealm	Taleworld
The storyteller and the audience	The tale

Figure 3.1: The Boundary Between Discourses

Two points should here be made. Firstly, similarity or contiguity between realms allows *meaning* to leak from one context to another. For instance, Young writes, the “meaning” of a dream can be interpreted by a linguistic integration into the order of everyday. The dream now becomes meaningful in terms of everyday life rather than of its own terms (Young 1987, 11). This point can be made about any tale: it's meaning is understood in terms of the Storyrealm wherein it is articulated. Secondly, the way the tale is *framed* in the Storyrealm affects the status of or attitude toward either the Taleworld or the Storyrealm. The status of one, Young argues, “bears on but does not fix the status of the other” (*Ibid*, 22). When a storyteller frames the conceptual limits between realms, the meaning as well as the framed status transferred from one realm to another needs inter-realm resonance. Or simpler put, in the context of this thesis: In order for a tale to be credible, it must be framed in accordance with perceptions that already exist in the Storyrealm.

Storyrealm	Taleworld
Affects the meaning of and attitudes towards the tale	Affects the attitudes towards the storyteller and her framing of the tale

Figure 3.2: How Meaning and Attitudes Leak between Realms

A methodological problem with the notions of Taleworld and Storyrealm is that these realms are relationally dependent yet not mutually excluding. It is useful to see these realms

metaphorically as *Matrjosjka*-puppets: One and the same story can be the mother of one tale and the child of another. However, the level upon which the notions are used should be clear from the context.

In the forthcoming analysis, I will incorporate Bakhtin, Young, and Laclau and Mouffes' theories into a coherent framework to find relations and boundaries between discourses through polyphony and negation. This analytical strategy will reveal how certain tales guide the Storyrealm of various discourses that are involved in a discursive struggle. How the discursive struggle unfolds will be explained by Fairclough's concept of 'order of discourse'.

3.1.3 The Struggle for Discursive Hegemony

The 'order of discourse' is a "particular combination or configuration of genres, discourses and styles, which constitutes the discursive aspect of a network of social practices"⁸ (Fairclough 2003, 220). It can be described as a social field of discursive conflict, and can on a certain level explain how discursive struggle and hegemony occur: all genres and discourses of a communicative action compete for authority on a subject matter (Jørgensen and Philips 1999). Fairclough describes the relationship between a communicative action and the order of discourse, as dialectic (*Ibid*, 83). The discourses and genres of an order of discourse constitute the resources available within that order of discourse, which limits the premises of the discourse. Simultaneously, the speaker can change the order of discourse by drawing on discourses or genres from other orders of discourse. Articulation of different discourses within and across different orders of discourse witnesses what Fairclough calls *interdiscursivity*, which moves the borders within and between orders of discourse. Interdiscursivity is a form of *intertextuality*, which refers to the influence of history on a text and the influence of a text on the history: every text draws from previous texts and contributes to the historical development of texts. Intertextuality has in principle the same function as Laclau and Mouffes' notion *articulation*, in the sense that it draws on existing patterns to form new ones (Jørgensen and Philips 1999, 145).

Different discourses draw on the intertextual history of the discourse and communicate through different *genres*. "The genres associated with a particular network of social practices constitute a *potential* which is variably drawn upon in *actual* texts and interactions" (Fairclough 2003, 69; emphasis in original). Fairclough distinguishes between three different

⁸ Fairclough separates between discourses and social practices in a different way than I will in this thesis, which I will come back to in chapter 4.

subcategories of genres, ‘pre-genre’, ‘disembedded genre’ and ‘situated genre’. He uses ‘pre-genre’ for “the most abstract categories like Narrative, ‘disembedded genre’ for somewhat less abstract categories like Interview, ‘situated genre’ for genres which are specific to particular networks of practices such as ‘ethnographic interview’” (*Ibid*). This differentiation is useful also for my purpose, but because this thesis is about other kinds of genres, I will use these terms differently. Linked to the geopolitical framework that will be discussed shortly; popular, formal and practical geopolitics can be regarded as *pre-genres* with dissimilar potentials. In this context, public diplomacy can belong to a *disembedded genre* and public relations, advertising and propaganda to a *situated genre*.

Subcategories	Concept
Pre-genre	Popular, formal and practical geopolitics
Disembedded genre	Public diplomacy
Situated genre	Propaganda, public relations, advertising, etc.

Figure 3.3: Subcategories of Genres

Which genre a discourse is identified with, greatly affects the rules and conception of the discourse. In an order of discourse, different discourses have diverging opportunities to use the same genres. For instance, it is far more controversial for a government to employ the propaganda genre than any actor in the private sector, because their activities are situated in different games of power. What is considered as controversial or conventional in the discourse is produced by the genre and the intertextual history of the discourse, and for the same reason; this is subject to change.

A main aspiration of Fairclough’s theory is to map societal change, of which discursive change is an expression. Fairclough sees the main tendency in the neo-liberal ‘marketization-discourse’ that has diffused into most aspects of daily life, particularly where the welfare-discourse previously dominated (Fairclough 1992; 1998). Several examples of contemporary societal organisation and reorganisation can demonstrate Fairclough’s point. However, in some social areas neo-liberalism seems to be in retreat. According to Anderson (2004), neo-liberalism has since 9/11 been giving way to neo-conservatism, with increased focus on the state, state borders, security and military power. The discussion about public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era in part 2 will exemplify how the marketization discourse in some ways has weakened its position and given way to a security imperative.

The theoretical concept of ‘order of discourse’ will be a structuring foundation of the forthcoming analysis, combined in a particular way with the Security analysis of the Copenhagen school of security studies.

3.1.4 Framework for a Differentiated Security-‘Order of Discourse’-Analysis

The Copenhagen School is a school of thought with origins in international relations that places particular emphasis upon the social aspects of security. The concept of *securitization* is central: It is argued that ‘security’ is a *speech act* with distinct consequences in international politics. By “talking” security an actor tries to move a topic away from politics and into an area of security in order to justify extraordinary means. The speech act “security” is a matter of framing a political issue as a matter of security, rather than speaking the word. Securitization is studied by its effect: an issue is securitized when the audience tolerates violations of rules that otherwise would have to be obeyed. Presenting something as a security threat is a *securitizing move*, but an issue is successfully securitized only when the audience accepts it as such.

According to the theory, any public issue can be located on the spectrum ranging from nonpoliticized through politicized to securitized. An issue is nonpoliticized when it is not dealt with by the state or made an issue of public debate; politicized when it is part of public policy and requires government decision and resource allocations, and securitized when it is presented as an existential threat that requires emergency measures. Securitization is a more extreme version of politicization because it “takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics” (Buzan et al 1998, 23).

Although securitization is an intensification of politicization in the sense that it strengthens the role of the state, the implications can be the exact opposite. The substantial difference between politicization and securitization is how an issue is regarded: “Politicization means to make an issue appear to be open, a matter of choice, something that is decided upon and that therefore entails responsibility” (*Ibid*, 29). Securitization means to present an issue as urgent and existential, important enough to legitimize secrecy and disregard for democratic rules. In national politics, existential threats are traditionally defined in terms of the constituting principle of sovereignty or against the ideology of the state (*Ibid*). International regimes can be existentially threatened by situations that undermine their constituting rules, norms, and institutions. I will come back to the social construction of threats later in this chapter.

The Security analysis specifically describes the self-legitimising function of *security*, although other kinds of framing also have the effect of moving the responsibility for and control over an issue away from politics into spheres where democratic rules do not apply. Such frames, which in accordance with the theory can be labelled ‘non-politicized’, justify the shift of control over an issue to experts, religious leaders, jurists, the family, the private sector, etc. A problem with locating ‘non-politicized’ issues on the opposite side of the spectrum to security is that they appear as less relevant or less powerful. A set of frames with this function that is relevant for analysing public diplomacy is *marketization*, which follows an economic imperative rather than a political and hence to a less extent abides by democratic rules.

There can be several ambiguities in a process of securitization that the security analysis does not register, because it regards the process as *one* movement. One and the same issue can be a matter of politicization and securitization in different discourses, such as anti-Americanism, which I will analyse in part 2 of this thesis. Moreover: the security analysis distinguishes between a securitizing move and a securitized issue according to whether it is accepted as such by the audience. A more differentiating theoretical framework could have shown that, who the audience is and what the accept entails, varies with the discourse. An incorporation of Fairclough’s concept of order of discourse in the security analysis can elevate the discursive struggle behind the securitization process to highlight a variation of movements with different functions. In this particular combination of theories, securitization is regarded as one distinct discourse in an order of discourse with parallel discourses.

I will later analyse a distinct order of discourse that I have called ‘public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era’ (PDWTE). In the PDWTE order of discourse, various discourses are in different ways involved in a discursive struggle about anti-Americanism and public diplomacy. Following the Copenhagen-school, I will crudely divide the discourses into three categories, but instead of the category of ‘non-politicized’ discourse, I will use Fairclough’s concept of marketization. The three discourses I will discuss are thus marketized, politicized- and securitized discourses. Each discourse is based on a set of tales about the threat and its consequences, and each has its own set of discursive resources (intertextual history and genres) and relative power to meet the threats. To find patterns of meaning in these discourses, I will use Laclau and Mouffes’ discourse theory, and to find polyphonic exchanges between the discourses I will use Bakhtin and Youngs’ notions. I will now turn to the geopolitical meaning I will search for in the discourse analysis.

3.2 Geopolitical Approach

Critical geopolitics, which is the geopolitical approach of this thesis, is a constructivist, post-Marxist approach to the geographical reasoning of all kinds of politics. The label ‘critical geopolitics’ refers to a school of thought as well as distinct theories associated with this theoretical enterprise. I will in the following discuss a theoretical framework that explains the geopolitical function of discourses. On a macro level, the geopolitical function of discourses is to direct geopolitical practices and hence contribute to reproducing the geopolitical order, and on a micro level it is to designate agents and threats through the establishment of geopolitical identities. But first, I will briefly discuss the origin and development of the concept of geopolitics and the *critical* and *geographical* aspects of critical geopolitics as a school of thought.

3.2.1 The Origin and the Critical Turn

The term ‘geopolitics’ was coined by Rudolf Kjellèn in 1899, and firstly became associated with the model of geographical influences on global conflict proposed by the British geographer Halford Mackinder in the early twentieth century, as an aid to the practice of British statecraft. After German geographers in the 1920s and 1930s adopted Mackinder’s model of a Eurasian ‘heartland’ and used it to justify Nazi expansionism on Eastern Europe, the term ‘geopolitics’ suffered from guilt by association, and fell into disuse (Agnew & Corbridge 1995, 1). In the mid-80s and following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, a loose group of political geographers and international relations scholars articulated a post-Marxist reformulation of geopolitics. They propose a constructivist approach to geopolitics that deconstructs the ideological presuppositions of geographical knowledge and practices. Geography is seen as a social discourse that has been construed and constructed by ideology and politics, and diffused into all aspects of social life. A central notion is ‘hegemony’, which is derived from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and developed into a geopolitical perspective. The *critical* aspect of this approach is thus a combination of Marxist and post-modern perspectives on power.

The approach is also essentially *geographical*, in its analysis of how places form the premises for the reductive geopolitical reasoning of intellectuals of statecraft. This practice, Agnew and Ó Tuathail argue, ‘spatializes’ international politics “in such a way as to represent it as a ‘world’ characterized by particular types of places, peoples and dramas” (Agnew & Ó Tuathail 1992, 80). These representations of space, in turn, are the guidelines for further geopolitical practice. In other words, this approach to geopolitics suggests there is a

dialectical relationship between representations of space and spatial practices. This is what Agnew and Corbridge (1995) call *geopolitical order* and *-discourse*: respectively the organization of spatial practices and the discursive consent-production and reproduction of the geopolitical order⁹. I will in the following discuss the dialectics between geopolitical practices and genres and representations.

3.2.2 Pre-genres and Representations Guide Spatial Practices

The geopolitical aspect of discourse involves how representations of space guide actions towards a geographical area or a people. Agnew and Corbridge refer to the term ‘geopolitical discourse’ as “how the geography of the international political economy has been ‘written and read’ in the practices of foreign economic policies during the different periods of geopolitical order” (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, 46). By ‘written’ they refer to “the way geographical representations are incorporated into the practices of the political elites”, and by ‘read’: “the ways in which these representations are communicated” (Ibid, 46-47). How the geography is written and read depends on two discursive aspects: pre-genres and representations.

3.2.2.1 Geopolitical Pre-genres

Simon Dalby and Gearóid Ó Tuathail (1998) add an extra dimension to Agnew and Corbridges’ theory by emphasising the broad social and cultural extent of geopolitics. Their approach to critical geopolitics is to regard geopolitics as a set of representational practices, which I will merge with the previously discussed notion of ‘pre-genre’.

The broadness of geopolitics is demonstrated with a three-fold typology that distinguishes the *practical geopolitics* of state leaders and foreign policy bureaucracy from the *formal geopolitics* of the strategic community nationally and internationally and the *popular geopolitics* of trans-national popular culture. Linked together, as shown in figure 4.4, they “comprise the geopolitical culture of a particular region, state or inter-state alliance” (Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998, 5).

⁹ The notion ‘geopolitical order’ should not be confused with the notion ‘order of discourse’ discussed previously.

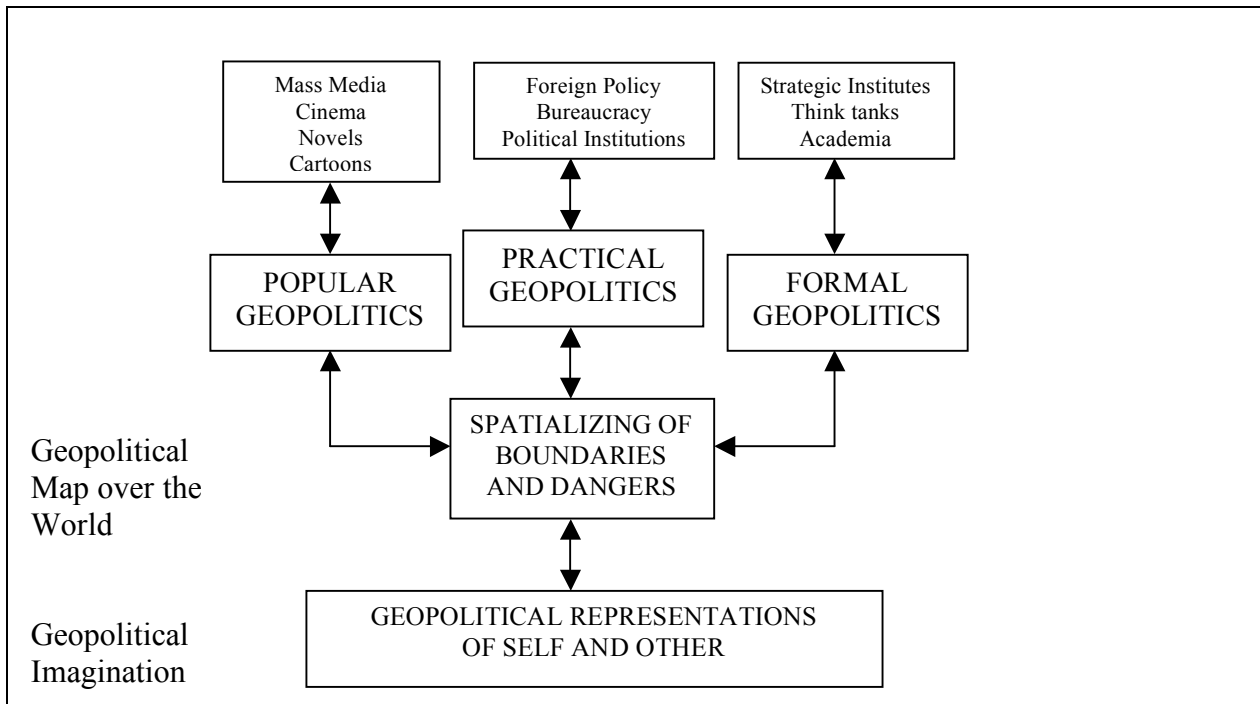


Figure 3.4: The Geopolitical Culture (Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998)

The figure opens an understanding of three issues. Firstly, based on Agnew and Corbridges' theory, the figure emphasises the dialectics of geopolitical practices and representations. Secondly, the figure points at the relationship between the geopolitical imagination and the geopolitical map over the world, as I will come back to. Thirdly, it takes into account a variety of agents producing geopolitical discourse who operate according to different logics. Investigating geopolitics at only one of the three suggested levels, or either of them separately, misses out on an important dimension of geopolitics. The diffusion of norms and ideas creates a 'smooth space' of rule, "constitutive of the very power that enables the US and its allied governments and organizations to act" (Allen 2003, 105). The formal geopolitical reasoning of the strategic community, Simon Dalby argues, has the ability to mystify politics through specialized discourses. They "act to reduce the role of political discussion by recasting the political issues in terms of technical problems to which they can, by using their specialized procedures, find 'correct' or 'optimal' answers" (Dalby 1990, 11). Popular geopolitics is important due to its wide reach, both in number of addressees and the ability to permeate people's everyday lives with imperceptible geopolitical reasoning. The space for practical geopolitics is seen as 'smoother' if it shares the depoliticized reasoning of formal and popular geopolitics; and practical geopolitics nurtures the narration of popular and formal geopolitics.

The model can be described as a deductive approach to finding specific types of geopolitics in traditions, tendencies, practices and debates. For a more inductive research approach, I see more utility in understanding popular, formal and practical geopolitics as *genres*, or more specifically, *pre-genres*, in a liberal interpretation of Fairclough's notion. A pre-genre is in this context a constituting part of a geopolitical practice that determines the ways in which geopolitical discourses are, or can be, produced and consumed. The reasoning around issues common for the respective categories of geopolitics can be the same, yet communicated and understood in completely different terms.

A conceptual problem is also circumvented when the categories 'popular', 'formal' and 'practical' geopolitics are regarded as pre-genres rather than reasoning: otherwise, the model would artificially separate between overlapping forms of reasoning. For example, the mass media does not only facilitate popular geopolitics, but also the mediation of formal and practical geopolitical reasoning, albeit usually in a hybrid form. Academic discourses are more likely to be accepted by mass media when it mixes academic- with popular discourses, and exclusively popular discourses have less credence in mass media than popular-political/academic discourses. When regarding popular geopolitics as a pre-genre, what is discovered is that mass media, for instance, is merely a generative facilitator for reasoning, which simultaneously affects how the message is produced and consumed.

3.2.2.2 *Geopolitical Representations*

The second aspect of geopolitical dialectics is how geopolitical representations direct geopolitical practices. This discursive process is what John Allen (2003, 102) calls the politics of *geo-graphing space*, that is, "writing or representing it in ways that justify a particular group's authority over a subject population." In this sense, hegemonic ideas embedded in geopolitical discourses reify themselves in foreign policy making. This is the dialectic aspect of the relationship between the geopolitical imagination and the geopolitical map of the world, as visualised on figure 4.4. By rendering certain geographical understandings 'obvious', intellectuals, institutions and practising statespersons justify the right of a political entity to exercise power, based upon *geopolitical visions*. "In writing such scenarios," Allen argues, "geographical metaphors and tropes come into play, such as the identification of 'rogue states' recently deployed by the US and its allies in their 'war' against 'terrorism', as well as rhetorical proclamations such as the 'clash of civilizations' and the 'end of history'" (Allen 2003, 102). Gertjan Dijkink defines geopolitical imaginations or visions as "any idea concerning the relation between one's own and other places, involving

feelings of (in)security or (dis)advantage (and/or) invoking ideas about a collective mission or foreign policy strategy” (Dijkink 1996, 11). His specific approach to geopolitics is the power to define *danger*, and hence to prescribe the remedy to provide *security*. A crucial discursive task of geopolitics, then, is to construct the popular understanding of order and threat. Linked together with figure 4.4, the understanding of order and threat has the ability to diffuse between geopolitical agents through the various genres of geopolitics and together create a ‘smooth space of rule’.

A geopolitical vision is often organised around a distinct *geopolitical subject*, which in geopolitical theory is understood as the basic agent shaping global political and economic relations (Kearns 2003, 174). I will base the understanding of a geopolitical subject upon the perspective of geopolitical representations and Laclau and Mouffes’ discourse theory. This approach to geopolitical subjects elevates the status of the represented ‘Other’ to a geopolitical subject.

Subjects are in Laclau & Mouffes discourse theory understood to be determined by the discourse. The discourse theory derives its understanding of the subject from the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and, via Michel Foucault, the French structural-Marxist Louis Althusser. To Lacan, the subject knows herself by identifying with something external and therefore constantly tries to “find herself” in the discourses (Jørgensen and Philips 1999, 55). The nodal points of identity, or *master signifiers*, in Lacanian terminology, are in different discourses given meaning in different ways. The master signifier is a sign with the ability to construct a node of definite meanings, such as man, woman, American, Muslim or any other kind of identity category. The way the subject is given meaning, is how different signifiers are connected in chains of *equivalence* or *difference*, which establish the identity relationally to what it is and what it is not. At once the subject’s identity has been identified; discourses then give guidelines for the subject. By identifying with a master signifier, the subject also identifies with and tries to live up to what this master signifier *positively connotes* within the given discourse. Likewise, the negative/opposition to this chain of equivalent meanings constitutes the Other, because the subject attains meaning through being different from something else (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). Not only the Other is understood in terms of the Self, but the Self is also understood in terms of the constructed Other. In this sense, identity is completely a social construction (Jørgensen and Philips 1999, 55).

Groups, such as ‘Americans’ or ‘Muslims’, are according to Laclau constructed in the same way as the subject. When a group is represented, an image of the rest of the society follows accordingly, because the group is constituted in negation to other groups. An identity

can thus not be separated from its context, because the context is constituted on the differentiation of the group (Laclau 1996). The construction of states follows the same logic: the history of statehood is about drawing borders to distinguish a state from what it is not. Moreover, the construction of the state has founded the state as a national community and defined the people at the inside as different from those at the outside. The geopolitical identity of a state or other geographic entity is applied to the members of the states. A geopolitical subject is thus any discursively represented identity and the geopolitical representation it is associated with. How a geopolitical subject is represented, affects how it should be acted towards in any given situation.

Although identities are mutually excluding according to the logic of Laclau and Mouffes' theory, geopolitical subjects can form *alliances* for common (symmetric or asymmetric) benefit. In the book *The Origin of Alliances*, Stephen M. Walt (1987) explores the alliance formation of states and argues that they either balance or bandwagon when confronted by an external threat. Balancing means allying with others against the prevailing threat and bandwagoning refers to alignment with the source of danger (Walt 1987, 17). Ideological solidarity is another explanation of alliance formation: the more similar states are, the more likely they are to ally (Walt 1987, 33). I will not focus on states in this thesis, but rather how discourses construct alliances between geopolitical subjects that give guidelines for the involved subjects. As I will analyse in part 2 of this thesis, the micro level of the geopolitical rationale of public diplomacy is how identities are established in discourses. The logic of the geopolitical dialectics emphasizes how the subjects' position and discursive guidelines direct what they can do and say within the geopolitical order.

The notion of *soft power* discussed in chapter 2 highlights the agency aspect of the geopolitical dialectics. Agents with soft power have the ability to persuade others of the appropriateness of their own geopolitical visions, or the definition of the involved subjects and threats. Soft power gives a geopolitical vision the ability to diffuse through the geopolitical culture and be expressed through genres and discourses with different range.

3.2.3 Spatial Practices Reproduce the Geopolitical Order

The significance of geopolitical discourses is how they guide spatial practices that in turn constitute the geopolitical order. Since the school of critical geopolitics started its theoretical enterprise in the mid-nineties the notion of 'geopolitical order' has been contested and developed in different directions. In the book *Mastering Space* from 1995, Agnew and Corbridge defined 'geopolitical order' as the organisation of spatial practices; "the routinized

rules, institutions, activities and strategies through which the international political economy operates in different historical periods” (1995, 15). An important development of the concept is who or what is perceived as the hegemon of the geopolitical order.¹⁰ In 1995, Agnew and Corbridge defined the *geopolitical order* as a state of hegemony, without a hegemonic state. At the time, this was a radical statement, because there was broad agreement that *Pax Americana* constituted the geopolitical order. In Agnew’s later book *Hegemony: the New Shape of Global Power* from 2005, he returns to the claim that the current geopolitical order is created by the US. Agnew argues that the contemporary world economy is a historical product of US design and ideology, which gained its position through the geographic expansion of economic practices. The marketplace society, mass consumer culture and the American way of conducting business have become a global condition: the right, acceptable and desirable form of human life. It developed in the nineteenth century in a rather national context but later materialized globally as the US model of conducting business expanded under the auspices of the US governments in the twentieth century.

An important criticism of Agnew’s book is the ambiguity of the role and meaning of agency in the historical development of the American hegemony. Agnew does not suggest that the creation of American hegemony has been a ‘project’ with a master plan, but rather shows how political-economic events have followed each other. I will not suggest that the American hegemony is a manufactured product, but the practice of public diplomacy is only one example of how the US government as well as several distinct agents and discourses have been important navigators in its making. Powerful networks such as *Pax Americana* during the Cold War and the neoconservative Project for a New American Century (PNAC) respectively had and have clear geopolitical aspirations: The former promoted a new age of enlightenment, called The American Century, the latter aggressively upholds the idea of the American leadership of the world. Together with the proactive US government, CIA, USIA and other institutions, these networks have contributed to creating and nurturing the American hegemony. The case of governmental public diplomacy demonstrates how geopolitical discourses are used strategically to reproduce the geopolitical order.

¹⁰ The notion of hegemony in this context must not be confused with Laclau and Mouffes’ notion of hegemonic discourses discussed previously, which refers to something that has been deemed objective.

3.3 Summary and Operationalisation of the Research Question

I have in chapter 3 outlined a coherent theoretical framework that integrates discourse theory and the geopolitical approach. The discourse theory and the geopolitical framework constitute respectively the strategy employed to find meaning and the specific kind of meaning that will be analysed.

The outlined discourse theory incorporates notions from Bakhtin, Young, Fairclough and Laclau and Mouffe in a framework that can explain different aspects of discourses, ranging from how implicit representations direct discourses to how different discourses struggle for the valid practice or description of an issue. The struggle also involves how the discourse frames issues and uses genres, which affect the rules that apply to the discourse, and how it is consumed and produced. How the discursive struggle unfolds relates to Fairclough's concept of 'order of discourse', which combined with the security analysis of the Copenhagen school will be a structuring foundation of the forthcoming analysis.

The geopolitical framework comprises more than can be associated with the school of critical geopolitics. Foundational for the framework is the dialectical relationship between the geopolitical order and –discourse, which emphasizes the role of representational practices ('pre-genres') and geopolitical representations (visions and subjects) in reproducing and changing the geopolitical order. Connected to Nye's three-dimensional chessboard of world politics, the geopolitical framework can explain how representations of the world influence geopolitical practices, and how the output interconnects with larger power structures.

I will in the following chapters analyse a specific order of discourse in which various discourses in different ways are involved in a discursive struggle about anti-Americanism and public diplomacy, called "public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era" (PDWTE). These 'discourses' comprise networks of practices, utterances and opinions. Each discourse is based on a set of tales about the geopolitical threat and its consequences, and each has its own set of discursive resources (intertextual history and genres) and relative power to meet the threats. Together, these discourses shape the development of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era. I will now turn to how the research question can be operationalised for the analysis.

The main research question of this thesis is, as discussed in the introductory chapter, "What is the geopolitical rationale of American public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era?" This rationale will be explained through three interlinked aspects: "what geopolitical representations dominate this public diplomacy order of discourse," "how do these representations manifest in public diplomacy efforts", and "how does the discursive struggle affect the output of American public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era"? I will answer

these questions through an analysis of the discursive struggle and a case. In chapter 5, I will categorise the discourses that dominate the PDWTE order of discourse, and analyse them according to each aspect. The first aspect will be explained through an analysis of the discourses' underlying geopolitical representations, or definition of the situation, designation of relevant subjects and assessment of the threat. The second aspect will be explained through an analysis of the means and messages the diverging discourses use, and consider appropriate, to counter the geopolitical threat. To explain the third aspect, I will analyse how the different strategies struggling on the same arena affect the order of discourse, by assessing their relative power to define public diplomacy according to their representation of the geopolitical situation.

In chapter 6, I will analyse the public diplomacy campaign Shared Values Initiative (SVI) from 2002. First, I will analyse the campaign as a geopolitical discourse through how it communicates geopolitical representations and its role in a broader network of power. Thereafter, I will discuss the debate that followed it in media, academia and public diplomacy circles, to analyse how the campaign represents the PDWTE order of discourse through what kinds of messages and methods are considered controversial or conventional.

But first, I will discuss the epistemological approach and analytical strategy of the thesis.

4

ANALYTICAL APPROACH

A typical identity marker that distinguishes the discourse analysis from other analytical strategies in the social sciences is its approach to ontology and epistemology. *Ontology* is the study of the existence and seeks to describe the basic categories of being, and *epistemology* is the study of the nature and scope of knowledge. Contrary to other social scientists that mainly focus on ontology, a discourse analyst is less interested in the *being* than the *becoming* – how and why objects have come to appear the way they do (Neumann 2001). The object of analysis in this thesis has been defined through a series of demarcations and a theoretical framework comprising Critical geopolitics, Security analysis and various branches of discourse theory. The discourse theory and the geopolitical framework constitute the two levels of the analytical strategy: respectively the strategy employed to find meaning and the specific kind of meaning that will be analysed. However, there has never been a clear distinction between the theoretical framework and analytical object. In this chapter, I will discuss how the philosophy of science, methodological approach and analytical strategy have contributed to shaping the analytical object and conclusions of this thesis, and evaluate the research.

4.1 Philosophy of Science

The theoretical framework of this thesis is based on a compound interpretation of post-Marxist epistemology, which combines post-modern and Marxist approaches to power, knowledge and geography.

Postmodern post-Marxism (hereafter called post-Marxism¹¹) is a theoretical amalgamation of two, in many ways, opposite epistemologies. Postmodernism refers in this context to the philosophy of science characterised by its fundamental critique of knowledge. While Marxism is a so-called ‘metanarrative’ that seeks to find the objective structures behind human interaction, postmodernism rejects the very notion of objectivity and claims that all knowledge is historically and culturally contingent. What postmodernism and Marxism have in common, however, is the deconstructive approach to knowledge and power. Although Marxism believes in objective structures, it indeed has a deconstructing tradition with notions

¹¹ Several branches of Marxism can be labelled post-Marxist, such as Structural Marxism, neo-Marxism, the Frankfurt school and analytical Marxism, but in this text, the emphasis is on postmodern post-Marxism.

such as ideology, false consciousness and hegemony, which emphasise the power and situatedness of knowledge. A fundamental difference between the Marxist deconstructive epistemology and the post-modern is that Marxism inserts an alternative Truth where the post-modern discourses mainly comment how the Truth is constructed. In *post-Marxism*, the rejection of the metanarrative is a matter of degree, from Laclau and Mouffes' anti-essentialist approach to Fairclough's emphasis on revealing discursive expressions of "real" economic power relations (Jørgensen and Philips 1999).

The epistemological value of geography can be incorporated into the post-Marxist framework. According to Henri Lefebvre (1991), the configuration of space is often taken to be objective, although spatial metaphors constitute a powerful form of reasoning in sciences and daily practices. In that sense, geography has a "naturalised" epistemology, embedded in our forms of reasoning. Before, during and after any spatial practice there is a discursive struggle about the configuration of space (Neumann 2001, 43). The post-Marxist aspect of this approach is the emphasis on deconstructing the power and modes of domination embedded in geographic practices, and is central in the critical understanding of geopolitics. Post-Marxist constructivism is also reflected in my *methodological* approach.

4.2 Methodological Approach

Political geography can be called a *geo-sociological* approach, which situates individuals and explains processes in social-geographical contexts (Agnew 1996). Unlike the disciplines of political science, sociology and economics, political geography demands a consideration of the spatial context in which a political process takes place, but at the same time, offers no specific methodology to measure spatial effects (O'Loughlin 2003, 35). There are advantages and disadvantages to employing approaches with little developed methodological framework. One advantage is that the approach allows for an exploring research strategy with space for creativity and for using interdisciplinary perspectives. A disadvantage, however, is that the use of approaches from other disciplines may seem less convincing when they are taken out of their original contexts. The intention of the theoretical approach of this thesis is to adapt such theories to a geo-sociological perspective rather than follow an already endorsed method. Although the creative benefits of the approach may compensate for the benefits of a strong methodological and theoretical tradition, a central challenge remains: to unite epistemologically diverging theories into a coherent framework.

In order to harmonise Critical geopolitics, Security analysis, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and Laclau and Mouffes' discourse theory, some conceptual translation is

necessary. Although all of these theories can be described as social constructivist, their epistemological foundations diverge: Laclau and Mouffes' approach can be categorised as 'idealist' and the others 'realist'. A principal difference between these approaches is that, where idealists merge epistemology with ontology, realists maintain this division. A problem with using the terms 'idealists' and 'realists' is the assumption that idealists reject the existence of a world external to thought: What they deny is rather that objects can constitute themselves as meaningful outside of a discursive context (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 108). An idealist would argue that, because our only access to the reality or materiality is through discourses, discourses *construct* the social world. A realist would argue that although aspects of the social world are socially constructed; once they are constructed they become *objective realities* that affect and limit the possibilities for discourse (Fairclough 2003, 8). In other words, realists distinguish between *discursive* and *social* practices where idealists suggest that discourses, practices and identities all can be understood in terms of the same, discursive, logic. This indicates a fundamental difference between the respective definitions of *discourse*: To idealists, discourse is a fixation of meaning in a broad sense, and to realists, it is a particular view on language, analysed in an abstract sense as "an element of social life", or as particular discourses (Fairclough 2003, 5).

The methodical implications of these two approaches are significant: Whether the discourse is regarded as the lingual element of social life or as the structuring totality of the social, determines the boundaries of the analytical object as well as its societal function. In the analysis, I will combine the two approaches in a particular way. I will follow Laclau and Mouffes' definition of discourse as a fixation of meaning in a broad sense, and hence understand also social practices and identities according to a discursive logic. When understood as such, what becomes noticeable is how institutional and methodical practices produce meaning, and how they struggle for establishment. However; a theory that understands structures, discourses and agents in the same terms, leaves no "natural" space for understanding hierarchies between discourses and speakers, although such hierarchies can be understood indirectly as discursively constituted and hegemonised entities. To clarify these levels, I will analytically separate between discourse and practice, but use the discourse theory also to explain 'extra-discursive' entities, such as subjects and social practices.

In discourse analysis, the difference between theory and method is seen as artificial. Although discourse analysis is often referred to as a method, the concept's genealogical origin is rather *anti-method*, because 'method' is frequently understood as a means to represent something from an external viewpoint. Because no such external viewpoint exists according

to discourse analysis, this approach to method is seen as unachievable and therefore inappropriate not only for discourse analysis, but for social sciences in general (Neumann 2001, 15). Any theory has methodical implications, and any method rests on some kind of theory. Instead, the notion ‘analytical strategies’ is employed to break down the hierarchy between the notions. I will now turn to the analytical strategy employed in this thesis.

4.3 Analytical Strategy and -Process

In constructivist research, neutrality is neither a possibility nor an ideal. The choices of theories, analytical strategies, research questions and empirical data determine the direction of the research process and hence the findings and conclusions. Throughout the research process, several choices, detours and reversals have shaped this thesis. The strategy applied can be labelled *abductive* reasoning, because the theory and data have been used in a dialectical fashion. Abductive dialectics means that theory offers perspectives to guide the interpretation of data, and in the next turn, systematic empirical analyses contribute to the development of theory, etc. (Thagaard 2003, 174). I have interchangeably used theory to highlight aspects of the empirical material, and the empirical data to show weaknesses of the theory.

It is often argued that the method or analytical strategy should be chosen according to its suitability for explaining an empirical phenomenon. I have not followed this advice nor do I believe it is customary to do so. Researchers usually have a theoretical or methodological preference that guides their choice of research material and research question. In the case of this thesis, my starting point was purely theoretical and emerged from an interest in popular geopolitics and discourse theory. I picked the case of American public diplomacy because it was a good example of popular geopolitics and an interesting study material for discourse analysis. My initial knowledge about American public diplomacy came from media studies, from scholars with a primarily critical focus on public diplomacy (See, for instance, Kamalipour 2004; Miller 2006; Snow 2002; 2003; Thussu 2005). After extensive reading, I turned to the literature from the public diplomacy culture to balance the image. What I found out after comparing media analyses of public diplomacy with public diplomacy *literature*¹² was that a discourse analysis of any public diplomacy campaign would give a very simplified image of its rationale. The public diplomacy culture is a conflictual one, and characterised by many different approaches and intentions, which would not be captured by an analysis of one or some of its expressions. Indeed, a campaign can be an excellent study material for finding geopolitical representations, but the representations may not even be accepted within public

¹² The public diplomacy literature is extensive and includes weblogs, websites, reports, books and articles.

diplomacy circles. To find out whether the geopolitical representations of such campaigns reflect the *rationale* of the public diplomacy culture, I decided to supplement the discourse analysis of campaigns with interviews with public diplomacy perpetrators and critics. The combination of research strategies is often called *triangulation*.

Traditionally, the purpose of triangulation in qualitative research has been to increase the validity of the results. The premise of validity is, if not contradictory to the purpose of qualitative research, certainly problematic in the episteme of postmodernism. For the purpose of validating findings, triangulation of methods carry the assumption “that there is a ‘fixed point’ or an ‘object’ that can be triangulated” (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005, 963). A postmodernist deconstruction of triangulation would recognize that there are far more than “three sides” by which to approach the world. Richardson and St. Pierre suggest that replacing the notion triangulation with ‘crystallization’ deconstructs the idea of validity; “we feel how there is no single truth, and we see how texts validate themselves” (*Ibid*). Such an approach provides a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of a topic, with space for doubt and for knowing that there is always more to know. I follow this critique of the notion of triangulation, but still find it a useful notion if its purpose can be redefined to finding new and more information on a topic. I have throughout the research process triangulated data, analytical strategies and theoretical approaches to produce a unique perspective.

There are advantages and disadvantages of studying a different culture. For an outsider, it can be easier to see congealed patterns and hegemonised ideas, but some nuances disappear in the process. In order to balance the cultural handicap as an outsider, I have made extensive efforts to understand as much as possible from the American public diplomacy culture. Before the field trip to the US in January 2007, I spent a whole semester studying secondary literature and find relevant interviewees. Because much of the literature about public diplomacy, anti-Americanism and the war on terrorism is brand new, I spent a week at the British Library in London for literature search. The preparation for the field trip included extensive reading of blogs, articles, reports, books and official websites, studying accessible public diplomacy efforts and interviewing public diplomats at the American Embassy in Oslo. This process gave me some indication of what this “public diplomacy culture” is about, and helped me to choose relevant interviewees and a central case.

The analytical strategies applied have allowed a systematisation of a large amount of data and perspectives to be incorporated into the analysis. The subject under discussion is a chaotic field, partly because it is under contemporary development, and partly because the interests behind and purpose of public diplomacy are inherently contradictory. I do not wish

to diminish the complexity of the analytical “object”. Rather, the main challenge of this thesis has been to choose analytical perspectives and construct categories that simultaneously capture the complexity and keep a clear and steady focus. I will now turn to how these choices and constructions have been done.

4.3.1 Analytical Operationalisation

The research question of this thesis has been theoretically operationalised in chapter 3, but operational questions also emerge regarding the analytical strategy: How can a geopolitical rationale be analysed? How do I choose relevant data? How do I construct relevant demarcations of theory and the analytical object, and of time and space?

The motivation and analytical demarcation of the research question is theoretical. A geopolitical rationale is a theoretical concept that must analytically construct its object of research to make sense. There is no such “thing” as a geopolitical rationale or essential structure that imposes actions or thoughts on subjects. Neither does it make sense to simply ask the agents what the geopolitical rationale is behind their actions. Discourse analysis is well suited for this task, because it is designed to search for *meaning*: how textual or other practices are constructed upon assumptions about the world.

Another demarcation of the analytical object is the time frame under discussion, the “war on terrorism era”. This “era” is an analytical construct, although its time frame is widely accepted as relevant: from the terror attacks on September 11, 2001 (9/11) till today.¹³ I have set this time frame because 9/11 constituted a catalyst of the current public diplomacy era. This is not to suggest that the current public diplomacy era exclusively relates to the memory of 9/11, but the incident certainly marked a change in the discourse. Setting a time frame always involves an analytical demarcation, because no history has a “beginning”. Memories of the past and past discourses always contribute to shaping a discourse (Neumann, 2001). Public diplomacy has a long tradition, and its rules, norms and conventions have developed through this process. The starting point of this time frame, however, is justifiable because it has initiated a cultural narration central to public diplomacy discourses. A greater challenge is the late ending point, because a number of public diplomacy practices have changed and new literature has emerged throughout my writing process. I have still chosen to follow this recent development because it gives a more comprehensive understanding of the direction public diplomacy has taken in this period.

¹³ Although this “era” is still evolving, I discontinued the research after Karen Hughes resigned from her post as Under Secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs on 31. October 2007.

The analytical object also includes a set of spatial demarcations. I have mainly focused on American public diplomacy in *Muslim countries*, because these are closer linked to the war on terrorism than, say, efforts towards the Norwegian audience. ‘Muslim countries’ does in this context not refer to places as such, but rather the construction of Muslim countries in the public diplomacy discourse. Because I wanted to study the *rationale* of public diplomacy rather than its effect, it was natural to choose the perpetrators rather than recipients as research object. However, many public diplomats mainly work “in the field”, at embassies, TV-networks, radio stations, publishing houses, etc., and do a smaller share of their work in the US. I still found that the State Department and other institutions in Washington DC were more appropriate as study object, because these are central in the development of the strategic direction of public diplomacy. For that reason, I chose the US as destination for my field trip.

A final demarcation concerns how I have chosen the analytical object. Two approaches have been employed to answer the research question: a study of a discursive struggle and a case study. These approaches require fundamentally different sets of demarcations: while the discursive struggle is analytically constructed, the case sets its own boundaries.

The American public diplomacy culture consists of a variety of conflict lines. If one were to ask different representatives for the public diplomacy culture what the main conflict lines were, different answers would emerge. However, an obvious pattern appeared from the interview material, which I have further construed with Security Analysis and discourse theory as guidelines. A combination of theory and an empirical observation has thus contributed to the demarcation of the analytical object. This demarcation has also formed the categorisation of discourses and agents in the analysis of the discursive struggle.

A case study is a research strategy that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin 2002). The empirical boundaries of the phenomenon determine the boundaries of the case. My approach to the case can be labelled *instrumental*. An instrumental case is one that is selected for its ability to *demonstrate* the phenomenon of interest, such as an understanding of an issue or refinement of theory. Although the case is studied in detail, it serves as a vehicle for the subject of interest (Stake 1995). I have chosen the controversial public diplomacy campaign Shared Values Initiative from 2002, which I have studied partly as a case and partly as a part of the discursive struggle. As a case, the campaign is interesting study material as a display of geopolitical visions. As a part of the discursive struggle, it is interesting because it has been so much debated that a substantial amount of information about its purpose and response is available. I have analysed the campaign as well as the

interview data as discursive practices because they, when regarded as such, give insight in the rationale of the public diplomacy culture.

I will now turn to how the sample of informants was selected, how the interviews were done and ethical issues concerning the interviews.

4.3.2 Interviews

In total sixteen people were interviewed for this thesis. Fourteen of them are listed in the appendix, and the remaining two were not relevant enough to count as data material. It was fairly easy to find suitable informants, and only a few of my interview requests were rejected. Because public diplomacy people work with information, they often participate in public debate in press and websites and are readily accessible through email. The basis upon which the informants were chosen varied: most of them were chosen due to the perspective of their writings in articles, books or reports; some were chosen with help from the State Department Press Office, and yet others were recommended by other interviewees. The sample of informants was chosen on the basis of already constructed categories, so-called *quota sampling* (Thagaard 2003, 55). These categories were ‘perpetrators’, ‘sideline critics,’ and ‘principal critics’, based on my impression of public diplomacy discourses from the consulted literature. The categories of critics can also be called ‘constructive’ and ‘deconstructive critics’, according to the nature of the critique. An early discovery in the interview process, however, was that each and every one of the interviewees was critical, even the perpetrators, in both a constructive and deconstructive sense.

During the interviews, I also found that my initial knowledge about the public diplomacy culture was insufficient on some areas. I had decided to focus only on State Department (SD) public diplomacy because it appeared from the literature as the most central agent. What I found was that the public diplomacy culture is profoundly fragmented. I was aware of that a variety of schools and approaches exists among traditional public diplomats, but a more significant division was much less noticed in the literature: a new agent had emerged as a public diplomacy perpetrator, the Department of Defense (DoD). After the field trip, more documents have been declassified and made publicly available about the involvement of the DoD in public diplomacy, but at the time, this information seemed to be less known and little debated in the literature. This new knowledge caused me to categorize the information differently and focus on other conflict lines than the initial intention, which made the categories through which I had chosen interviewees in some ways obsolete. For that reason, I added more interviewees to the sample and slightly changed the focus of the

interviews. Despite the rearrangement of categories; the broadness of the sample has been a great advantage due to the varied understanding of public diplomacy it has provided.

A weakness of my data material is that the discursive struggle between SD and DoD is asymmetrically represented with a bias in favour of the SD. Nobody at the DoD was willing to be interviewed, only two of my interviewees had background from the DoD and only one of them was interested in defending that institution. This means that the discursive struggle is in the interviews represented partly from a SD point of view, partly from external viewpoints and only briefly from that of DoD. To balance the data bias, I have consulted DoD budgets, reports and articles that discuss the distribution of public diplomacy tasks between SD and DoD. The nature of information produced by interview data and reports, however, profoundly diverge, and hence the DoD appears more static and uniform. I have taken the consequence of the data bias by focusing in more depth on SD public diplomacy and how this camp relates to the DoD than the DoD practice *per se*.

The interviews produced almost twenty hours of taped material that was later transcribed. I never intended to strictly compare the interviews, so I used the opportunity to try a variety of interview techniques. These techniques can all be labelled *semi structured*: “neither an open conversation nor a highly structured questionnaire” (Kvale 1996, 27). In some interviews, I asked only a few, broad questions and tried to direct the conversation according to the relevance of the information that came up. In others I asked more specific questions, and in a few cases I provoked a debate. Two of the interviews were group interviews, with two informants in each. None of the techniques turned out more favourably than others, and the difference between the data material it produced followed the lines of perspectives rather than the interview technique. The subject under discussion, however, was defined differently by each interviewee: the definition of public diplomacy evoked resolute, yet diverging, opinions. Because the main topic was subject to negotiation, the interviews were hard to predict, regardless of preparation. This relates to Haraway’s (1991) notions about *situated knowledges*. Because the interviewer and the interviewee have different situated knowledges, they can never fully understand each other. I must admit that I have knowingly used this occasion to get access to both the interviewees and to information, which also poses an *ethical* question concerning the interview process.

4.3.2.1 *Ethical Issues*

The central purpose of critical sciences is to reveal power structures, and hence the consideration for ethical issues is regarded lighter when dealing with elites. Elites are usually

capable of defending themselves through their defining power and access to media etc. While some of my informants certainly can be regarded as members of an elite, all of them were educated and had some kind of professional background from the subject under discussion, and hence to some extent fall into the same category. The only use I have made of this reversed power structure is the amount of information I have shared about the project. Because some of the informants might become wary if they knew that the theoretical approach was critical geopolitics, the project proposal attached to each interview request scarcely focused on the critical aspect.¹⁴ However, with only one exception, it did not seem to interest the interviewees for what purpose the information would be used.

Another ethical consideration concerning the interviews is the principle of confidentiality (NESH 1993). I have chosen to keep my sources open since none of the interviewees expressed any wish to be treated anonymously. Because they were educated, accustomed to journalists and researchers, and no personal information was exchanged, I see no reason to believe that the lack of confidentiality could harm the informants. However, I have chosen to protect the sources in a few cases where the interview situation has been informal and allowed criticism that might look harsher in print. I will in the following section assess the research according to certain criteria, which includes the care for informants.

4.4 Research Assessment

Traditionally, social sciences have proposed standard criteria to determine the quality of a study. Reliability, validity and generalisation have been accepted as such criteria (Kvale 1996). These notions have to some extent become rejected in social sciences, because they are formed on the premise from quantitative sciences that all knowledge is measurable. In a constructivist approach, these notions are also considered inappropriate because they reflect a philosophical presupposition that it is possible to achieve an objective or true knowledge about the world. Lincoln and Guba (1989) replace these notions with criteria that they argue better reflect the underlying assumptions involved in much qualitative research: credibility, confirmability and transferability.

One way of demonstrating the *credibility* of the research is to discuss the choices made throughout the research process, how the analytical object is constructed and analysed so that the reader can assess the choices made by the researcher (Dyrberg *et.al.* 2000). I have made extensive efforts to make the research transparent, by exposing the philosophical presuppositions, theories and analytical strategies applied. However, the credibility criterion

¹⁴ The project proposal is listed in the appendix.

can also imply that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research.¹⁵ This can be described as an “empirical” approach to the criterion, because the participants do not necessarily recognise the theoretical notions applied and hence could feel alienated by the analysis. The interpretation of data also involves selection of data, which means that some participants would recognise more from the analysis than others. I have in the research focused on certain trends that have appeared as central from various sources, but if some of the participants would find these trends less relevant to how they perceive public diplomacy, it is understandable. This also relates to the criterion of *confirmability*, which refers to the extent to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. All the aspects of public diplomacy I have focused on in this thesis are recognised by other literature. However, because the geopolitical perspective is a theoretical construct, it would only be corroborated by those who accept the premise of the theory. This also relates to the criterion of *transferability*, which refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings. An appropriate approach for this study is from grounded theory: Blumer’s notion of ‘sensitizing concepts’. Sensitizing concepts can be understood as “background ideas that inform the overall research problem” (Charmaz 2003). The kind of transferability this approach advocates, is thus to regard the findings of one analysis as starting points for another. This thesis advocates a perspective that could be used in other studies to highlight the *geopolitical assumptions* that structure our everyday practices. In order for such a perspective to be established in the social sciences, it *should* be transferred to other analyses: it should be repeatedly tried, developed and debated. In the last resort, the credibility of a perspective rests on its recognition by the research community.

I will now turn to the actual analysis: What is the geopolitical rationale of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era?

¹⁵ <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualval.php>

5

THE GEOPOLITICAL RATIONALE

The concept of ‘geopolitical rationale’ of American public diplomacy requires differentiation; as a singular rationale representing the practice does not exist. It is rather subject to discursive struggle, advocated by different agents. In this chapter, the geopolitical rationale will be analysed through a classification of discourses that struggle for the definition of the geopolitical situation, so-called geopolitical discourses. These discourses constitute an order of discourse described as “public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era” (PDWTE). Although the current public diplomacy era involves more than can be related to the war on terrorism, this geopolitical situation has such a structuring impact on public diplomacy that it has produced a distinct order of discourse. The forthcoming analysis will be structured around the central public diplomacy discourses in this order of discourse, which I have classified as ‘politicized’, ‘securitized’ and ‘marketized’. This specific categorisation pinpoints how the diverging interpretations of the geopolitical threat have contributed to fragmenting the development of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era. I will use the categories to deconstruct this process by analysing how the geopolitical visions of the order of discourse designates responsible institutions and forms the methods and messages of public diplomacy; how the respective discourses have developed since 9/11, and how the inherent differences between, and power of, the discourses affect the output of American public diplomacy in this era.

The principal geopolitical threat structuring this order of discourse is *anti-Americanism*. However, the threat of anti-Americanism has different implications in different discourses about public diplomacy. A discourse that understands anti-Americanism as a threat to US soft power can be characterised as *politicized*, because it situates the geopolitical threat in a political game of power. In such a discourse, public diplomacy is regarded as a tool to turn the worldwide negative attitudes towards the US that particularly mushroomed following the US-led war on terrorism and the Iraq war. Since the decline of soft power cannot be countered with unattractive means, this discourse often advocates enhancing and/or communicating the resources that makes the US attractive, such as democratic values like freedom of expression.

Declining soft power can also constitute a security threat, because it makes the US more vulnerable to attacks and weakens its ability to build international alliances necessary for military actions. However, when anti-Americanism is regarded *principally* as a security threat, it produces a discourse characterized as *securitized*. Because security prevails over other interests in this discourse, the means to counter the threat are not obliged to consider the potential loss of soft power. Hence, the securitized discourse has the opportunity to employ more diverse means for public diplomacy and other information strategies.

Anti-Americanism is in some discourses principally regarded as an economic issue that affects the competitiveness of the US and American firms abroad. This approach can focus on threats to the trade security as well as marketing power, and the discourse it produces can be characterised as *marketized*. Examples of such threats are potential trade barriers, commodity boycotts, declining brand value, etc. Different processes can be described as marketization of public diplomacy. One such process involves that public diplomacy activities are being outsourced to private actors, on the initiative of governmental institutions or the private sector. Another involves that market logic, with discourses and genres associated with the private sector, are increasingly diffusing into the public diplomacy sphere. Both processes result in a change of the number and variety of agents and methods of public diplomacy.

A final set of discourses in the PDWTE order of discourse that is worth mentioning is critical discourses that approach the threat of anti-Americanism mainly by its cause, and argue that the cause is American foreign policy. These focus on the unethical aspects of public diplomacy, whether it relates to the use of propagandistic methods or cultural imperialism. Because these discourses usually stay outside boundaries of the practicing public diplomacy sphere, they have less influence on the development of the PDWTE order of discourse. Therefore, they will only briefly be discussed in this thesis.

Discourse analyses can be at risk of becoming vague and inefficient when they avoid grounding the discourses in institutions or other tangible spaces. Although the discourses under discussion often cross institutional boundaries, it is useful to identify their institutional foundations, because different institutions are *designed* to target different threats and hence interpret the situation according to their mandate. I will mainly focus on securitized and politicized public diplomacy discourses, but a secondary perspective is how the marketized discourses contribute to shaping the other discourses.

As discussed in chapter 2, there exist a variety of institutions that in one way or another are involved in public diplomacy activities. Central institutions are State Department (SD), Office of Global Communications and Broadcasting Board of Governors. Somewhat

less acknowledged until recently, is the involvement of the Department of Defense (DoD) in public diplomacy activities. Other institutions could be listed, but I will limit this analysis to SD and DoD. Which institution performs which tasks of public diplomacy is significant because the institutions largely base their practices on different discourses. Of course; because the categorisation is analytically essentialised, there will always be exceptions. The categories ‘securitized’ and ‘politicized’ discourses to some extent correspond with the respective institutions’ approach to public diplomacy; DoD employing securitized discourses and SD politicized. As I will come back to, this pattern is partly shifting because the SD discourse is increasingly influenced by the securitized discourse of DoD and the Bush administration.

During the interviews with SD people, former diplomats and external critics, an initial impression was that they all were familiar with public diplomacy being a conflictual field, and a central struggle being between SD and DoD. A representative for the public diplomacy culture attributes the struggle to what he calls tribal cultures.

“Public diplomacy has tribal cultures. Diplomats are a tribal culture; the military can be seen as a tribal culture. [...] The people who do democratisation are a tribal culture; the people who do cultural exchange are a tribal culture. They don’t talk to each other! They want to defend their budget, they want to, ‘the way I approach this is really the answer and you military folks don’t know what you’re talking about’” (Gregory, Interview 2.3.2007).

This description is typical of the State Department public diplomacy discourse. On the one hand, public diplomats are almost invariably critical to DoD methods, but on the other, the polyphonic presence of the DoD public diplomacy discourse witnessed an exchange between the discourses. The notion of polyphony is useful here to point out the influence of the DoD on the SD discourse without being present.

Before I turn to how the politicized and securitized trends shape specific practices and discourses, I will analyse how the geopolitical representation of anti-Americanism direct the respective discourses.

5.1 The Geopolitical Premise of Public Diplomacy Discourses

The idea of anti-Americanism is essentially geopolitical because it represents a power structure by which the US in one way or another is threatened by the outside world. Polls about anti-Americanism are omnipresent in contemporary literature about public diplomacy, be it “insider” or critical literature (See, for instance, Rugh 2006; Lynch 2006; Lord 2006; Stauber & Rampton 2006; Nye 2004; Telhami 2002; Satloff 2004; Djerejian 2003; Zogby 2002, etc.), and the polls were frequently referred to by my interviewees. The idea that anti-

Americanism both shapes the information climate and necessitates public diplomacy is hegemonic in the securitized, politicized and marketized discourses. Alternative ideas about anti-Americanism and public diplomacy are still available: for instance, it can be claimed that anti-Americanism can only be countered by policy change or that public diplomacy can only have an impact if the audience already sympathises with the message. These ideas exist in critical discourses, but seem to have little influence in the PDWTE order of discourse. An observation from my interviews with public diplomacy critics is that the argument that public diplomacy can not alter anti-Americanism is not consistently formulated. A typical example:

“The reason why there’s anti-Americanism in the world is because people don’t like the product, it’s not because it’s not being sold well. That’s the basic flaw in the whole public diplomacy industry. [...] Having said that, of course, it’s possible and important for the US to do a much better job at public diplomacy (Toensing, interview 26.2.2007).

The articulation seems to be representative for critical discourses: The speakers argue that policy change is necessary to turn the unfavourable opinion, yet request typical public diplomacy elements in the process, such as language skills, dialogue and cultural sensitivity. Therefore, I partly include critical discourses when I argue that there is a broad agreement in the PDWTE order of discourse that the challenge of anti-Americanism is a responsibility of public diplomacy.

What the geopolitical threat of anti-Americanism means, on the other hand, is differently defined in the securitized, marketized and politicized discourses. I will briefly present some polls about global (especially Muslim) attitudes towards the US, before I discuss how the discourses in the PDWTE order of discourse relate to these statistics.

Since 9/11, tracking public opinion has become a widespread enterprise, and various institutions such as the Pew Global Attitudes Project and Zogby International are involved in surveys. The polls show a worldwide trend of plunging opinions towards the US (Kohut 2007).¹⁶ The negative opinions are clearly strongest in Muslim countries, although there has been a slight improvement in some countries since the negative peak following the Iraq war. Moreover, with the Iraq war, anti-Americanism spread to Muslim countries where the U.S. had previously been relatively popular. Polls show that many in Muslim countries began to see the U.S. as a threat to Islam after the Iraq war. A 2005 Pew study found that in all five

¹⁶ All the statistics in this section are from the same report (Kohut 2007), which can be retrieved at <http://pewglobal.org/commentary/pdf/1019.pdf>. The reason for choosing this particular report is because it shows a longer time frame and includes newer figures than most similar reports, and it compares the public opinion in relatively many countries.

majority Muslim countries surveyed, solid majorities said they worried that the U.S. might become a military threat to their country. In 2006, a poll showed that majorities in Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan believe the war has made the world a more dangerous place. The war on terrorism is also perceived quite negatively throughout much of the Muslim world, and the support for American anti-terrorism efforts are declining in many parts of the globe. An important reason appears to be that people distrust the US' motives. In a 2004 Pew poll, majorities in seven of the nine countries surveyed said the war on terrorism was not really a sincere effort to reduce international terrorism. Suspected motives were "to control Mideast oil", "to dominate the world", "to target unfriendly Muslim governments" and "to protect Israel". A more optimistic finding is that the polls show a significant improvement in Indonesian public attitude towards the US after the 2004 tsunami relief efforts. This example is also frequently used in public diplomacy literature as a proof that public diplomacy together with aid can turn unfavourable opinions.

The Pew opinion surveys include several more findings of reasons for the US' declining popularity, and most of them relate to US foreign policy. Because there is an agreement that these polls are relevant for public diplomacy, they are interesting for this study as a tale the Storyrealm of public diplomacy discourses relate to: The geopolitical threat of anti-Americanism is the source of the reinvigoration of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era.

Although the consequences of the US' declining standing are construed differently in securitized, marketized and politicized discourses, the polls are uniformly interpreted with the notion 'anti-Americanism'. The hegemony of this notion is interesting, not because it necessarily is an inappropriate term, but because it constitutes a central premise throughout the PDWTE order of discourse that none of the conflicting discourses seem to question. In contrast, there exists no such notion as 'anti-Norwegianism' despite of the incendiary bombing of the Norwegian embassy in Syria in 2006, or the foreign disapproval of Norway's involvement in controversial industries such as whaling.

The hegemony of the notion of anti-Americanism is rather new in the public diplomacy discourse. During the Cold War, public diplomacy discourses usually presupposed that the audience sympathized with the US because the threat of the Soviet Union was taken to be the worse alternative. It was only after 9/11 the notion of anti-Americanism came to structure the public diplomacy discourse, although the US' declining popularity already was a concern in the SD in early 2001 (Fullerton and Kendrick 2006).

Before I turn to what premise anti-Americanism forms for the various discourses, a short reminder of Laclau and Mouffes' discourse theory is in place. A discourse is established around certain *nodal points*, which constitute a structuring element that other signs are established in relation to. These other signs are categorised as *elements* and *moments*, the former referring to floating signifiers and the latter to signs with a fixed meaning in the discourse. In the PDWTE order of discourse, the signs 'anti-Americanism' and 'security' are central in all the discourses, but their meanings change according to the discourse.

In the marketized discourse, an *economic rationale* constitutes the nodal point. Anti-Americanism can be seen as a moment because its meaning is fixed as an economic threat and hence constitutes the rationale for engaging in public diplomacy. Security can be seen as an element because the rather vague idea that anti-Americanism can affect the competitiveness and trade security of American firms has made private actors interested in public diplomacy. However, it merely constitutes one of various factors, and neither is it clear what security means for the specific actor nor is it necessarily the *source* of the interest.

In the securitized discourse, *security* constitutes the nodal point because all the elements and moments in the discourse are structured in relation to it. Anti-Americanism is a fixed moment in the discourse. It is uniformly perceived as a security threat, often as an existential threat against both the American people and territory through terrorism and against American ideology through radical Islamism. Although there are securitized elements to SD public diplomacy, a "purer" expression of securitized public diplomacy can be identified in the Department of Defense (DoD) approach. The DoD standing body for coordination of strategic communication (one of which public diplomacy), the Strategic Communication Integration Group (SCIG), has two priorities approved by the Deputy Secretary of Defense. These are to "Educate coalition and domestic audiences on Iraq strategy", and to "Counter al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan" (Wells 2007, 4). In other words, the strategy is broader in the sense that it comprises foreign *and* domestic audiences, but the goal is narrowed down to the war on terrorism and the war on Iraq. Due to the narrow goal, the DoD has no other matters to balance, and hence, security has a structuring impact on all other interests.

In a politicized discourse, the notion of security is a *moment* because it has a specific meaning yet balances the threat with other factors at risk. The SD Director for Public Diplomacy for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Alberto Fernandez, attributed this to a broader definition of what is at stake in the war on terrorism.

“Everything we do has a cost beyond the cost of the thing itself. [...] Guantanamo has other costs to it. It has a social cost, a political cost, a moral cost, it costs you in that critical mass of goodwill, of a good view of the US that people have, they may be real or not” (Fernandez, interview 28.2.2007).

This critical mass of goodwill, which can be described with Nye’s notion of ‘soft power’, relates to any issue where influence requires other or more assets than military or economic power. Such spheres of influence range from trade to diplomacy and popular culture. The nodal point in the politicized discourse is thus *soft power*, and its role for countering terrorism exemplifies where this discourse diverges from the securitized. Typical of the politicized discourse is the argument that the US in the war on terrorism has relied too much on the wrong assets.

“The problem is that Islamist motivated extremism that is manifested in terrorism, is not overwhelmingly military or security or intelligence related. It’s an intellectual issue, an ideological issue. It built up over time by certain trends of jihadi Islam being perverted or channelled to violent extremes. It is something that is manifested by terrorism, but it did not become that over time by violence. It became what it became over time in schools, in universities, in the media, on the Internet, in publications, and we [the US] have hardly addressed *that* side of the problem” (Fernandez, SD, interview 28.2.2007).

The claim that the disregard for root causes in the war on terrorism may have increased the terror threat is typical of a politicized approach. Security and terrorism are thus central moments, but because these are structured around the nodal point ‘soft power’, security attains a different meaning. The notion of anti-Americanism constitutes an *element* in the discourse, however central, because it has a floating meaning: it variably refers to the terror threat and the general loss of soft power, particularly following the war on terrorism. This dilemma resembles Nye’s theory of world politics as a “three-dimensional chess game”: the war on terrorism works in interplay with other games of power. In this three-dimensional game, military, economic and transnational issues must be coordinated, and different power resources must be judged according to their contexts. In order to succeed in the three-dimensional game, perceptions must be taken into account and the possible cost of soft power must be balanced against other actions.

A foundational split in the PDWTE order of discourse is which geopolitical vision anti-Americanism is associated with. The premise that anti-Americanism constitutes a security threat exists in each discourse, but it does not necessarily securitize the discourse. The sign ‘security’ constitutes a nodal point in the securitized discourse, a moment in the politicized discourse and an element in the marketized discourse. In practice, this means that

‘security’ is imperative to the securitized discourse, has a specific meaning to the politicized and exists as a notion to the marketized discourse. The structure of the discourses can be summarised as follows:

	Securitized	Politicized	Marketized
Nodal point	Security threat	Soft power threat	Economic threat
Moment	Anti-Americanism	Security threat	Anti-Americanism
Element	-	Anti-Americanism	Security threat

Figure 5.1: The geopolitical premise of the different discourses

The implication of these differences relate to how the security threat is defined, how the solution is prescribed and whether this solution prevails or is balanced against other costs. It is thus the respective nodal points of the discourses that determine what kind of geopolitical threat anti-Americanism constitutes and what considerations that should be taken into account for countering it. In a securitized discourse, anti-Americanism represents a security threat that must be countered; in a politicized it represents a decline of soft power that must be won back. These considerations, in turn, shape the discourses’ guidelines, or “rules”, for public diplomacy.

5.2 The Rules of Public Diplomacy in the Various Discourses

An initial impression during the interview process was that there exists a discursive struggle about the practice of public diplomacy in the PDWTE order of discourse. This discursive struggle is about the rules of the game: which methods of public diplomacy and strategic communication are appropriate, strategically clever or even legal. These “rules” of public diplomacy can be called features of the geopolitical order, because they refer to institutionalised patterns that enable geopolitical discourses.

The rules of the discourses are not only based on the understanding of anti-Americanism, they have been produced through the different intertextual histories of the discourses. Because the marketized and securitized discourses are “new” challengers to the more traditional politicized discourse, they have diverging functions in the PDWTE order of discourse. In the recent years, public diplomacy has been heavily debated in news media; blogs, articles and books, and some 30 reports have been produced to advise the US government about the strategic direction of public diplomacy. This debate is interesting because it reveals how different rules apply to public diplomacy according to which geopolitical threat it is designated to target: whether the threat of anti-Americanism is based on the rationale of security, economics or soft power. I will discuss how the respective

discourses have affected the rules of public diplomacy in separate paragraphs: the marketized and the politicized discourses in the SD, and the securitized in SD and DoD.

5.2.1 Marketized Public Diplomacy

Marketization of public diplomacy in the SD has manifested in different expressions. Two distinct periods have characterised the SD discourse since 9/11: Charlotte Beers' era from October 2001 to March 2003 and Karen Hughes' era from July 2005 to October 2007.¹⁷ A comparison of Beers' and Hughes' practices of is interesting because their respective approaches have left such different footprints on the public diplomacy discourse. The different receptions of Beers' and Hughes' approaches in public diplomacy circles give insight in broader tendencies in the discourse.

The appointment of the former advertising executive Charlotte Beers as Under Secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs in 2001 illustrated the influence of the marketized discourse, but it also marked its limitations.

Months before Beers was sworn in, then Secretary of State Colin Powell told a House Budget Committee that the SD would bring "people into the public diplomacy function who are going to change from just selling us in the old USIA way to really branding foreign policy, branding the department, [...] marketing American values to the world" (Fullerton and Kendrick 2006, 20). The marketing-discourse was drawn directly from Beers, who later introduced the situated genre of advertising in public diplomacy. The introduction of the advertising genre in the SD public diplomacy discourse is well described by Fairclough's notion of marketization, referring to market logic diffusing into areas where other discourses previously have dominated. Fairclough uses this notion to describe societal change. In this case, the marketization process did not produce a permanent change. It rather caused a major debate from its introduction, and the method of advertising was accused of being unethical on the one hand and counterproductive on the other. The advertising strategy has been advocated by some, like the prominent Djerejian report (2003), but the discourse has not taken hold in the SD. State Department officials have rather distinguished themselves from Charlotte Beers and the advertising strategy. The reluctance to accept the marketized discourse in the SD is also an example of the context-dependency of Fairclough's notion, which often appears as if it describes a process without an exit.

¹⁷ Between March 2003 and July 2005, the position as Under Secretary was occupied for only six months between December 2003 and June 2004 by Margaret Tutwiler, former ambassador to Morocco, and for the rest remained vacant.

After Beers' resignation, the SD internally chose to push back on the marketized discourse. Still, it is involved in a different marketization process by encouraging businesses to engage in public diplomacy.¹⁸ Karen Hughes underlined the role of the private sector in her first testimony as Under Secretary before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2005. Under the heading "the Mission of Public Diplomacy", she claimed that, "We [...] must develop effective ways to marshal the great creativity of our private sector [...] because I believe this engagement is critical to our success" (Hughes 2005). Sheldon Rampton at the Center for Media and Democracy explained this tendency with the businesses' more differentiated means for public diplomacy: Businesses can reach into foreign cultures in ways the government does not, like consumption, and have fewer legal restraints. The businesses' motivation for engaging in public diplomacy activities, Rampton argued, is that they are concerned that the declining American reputation abroad affects their ability to do business, and they believe that they can do a better job than the government (Rampton, interview 12.2.2007).

The marketization process of the SD discourse in Karen Hughes' era was substantially different than that of Charlotte Beers. On the one hand, the increase of agents performing public diplomacy efforts without leaving government fingerprints makes more differentiated efforts possible. On the other hand, because other agents take on some of this work, the SD public diplomacy discourse can sway away from the marketized discourse and focus on democratic ideals, which are seen as less controversial as governmental public diplomacy activities. This subtle marketizing process thus simultaneously leads to a politicization of SD public diplomacy.

5.2.2 Politicized Public Diplomacy

Since Karen Hughes entered office, process issues have been reversed and transformed in the State Department. During her first testimony, "the Mission of Public Diplomacy" (22.06.2005), Hughes described her approach to public diplomacy in the war on terrorism, which was clearly influenced by the premise of soft power:

"In the long run, the way to prevail in this battle [of ideas] is through the power of our ideals; for they speak to all of us, every people in every land on every continent. Given a fair hearing, I am sure they will prevail. [...] Our adversaries resort to propaganda, myths, intimidation and control because they don't want people to decide for themselves. In contrast, we want to create the connections and conditions

¹⁸ The involvement of the private sector is not new in public diplomacy, but the past years it has become a central issue in public diplomacy discourses.

that allow people to make up their own minds, because we are confident that given a fair hearing and a free choice, people will choose freedom over tyranny and tolerance over extremism every time.”

The emphasis on attractive power situates the articulation in a politicized discourse, which in the next turn affects the strategic direction and selection of methods to target the geopolitical threat. To accomplish the mission of public diplomacy, Karen Hughes outlined four strategic pillars for public diplomacy in the war on terrorism, “the four E’s”: engagement, exchanges, education and empowerment. ‘Engagement’ refers to the advocacy of American ideas and rapid response to “confront hateful propaganda, dispel dangerous myths, and get out the truth” (Hughes 22.06.2005). ‘Exchanges’ means giving more people the opportunity to live, work and study in the US, so that they “can learn for themselves that Americans are generous, hard-working people who value faith and family” (*Ibid*). ‘Education’ refers both to enhancing Americans’ knowledge about the world and offering English language training programs in foreign countries. ‘Empowerment’ involves advocating participation for women, and helping those who share American values. Another notion that public diplomacy people associate with Karen Hughes is ‘dialogue’. The strategic pillars and the dialogic ideal appear to be widely embraced by public diplomats. What Hughes has often been criticized for is that she does not always herself follow her ideals: she is rather infamous for talking more than she listens, and for not being sensitive to cultural differences when she is advocating ‘universal ideals’.

Hughes’ selection of methods reflects the politicized discourse: they are balanced against other potential costs. Since 9/11 and following the war on terrorism, it has been reported that American public diplomacy efforts have been received as propaganda and attempts to control foreign public opinion. Examples of controversial efforts are the advertising campaign Shared Value Initiative, Hi Magazine and the television channel *Al Hurra*. It seems that the image as a propagandist that followed these efforts has been taken seriously, because Karen Hughes and the SD have either abandoned or started to relate differently to the controversial public diplomacy efforts. Only a few months after Hughes entered office, Hi Magazine was suspended. The SD started more or less to distance itself from *Al Hurra*, which is a product of the Broadcasting Board of Governors. Instead of talking on *Al Hurra*, Hughes and public diplomats chose to show up on Arabic media like *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya*, which have larger audiences and higher credibility among Muslims.

Not only has Karen Hughes reversed unpopular public diplomacy efforts, new methods have been introduced. A priority under the strategic pillar ‘engagement’ is the Rapid Response Unit, which provides extensive monitoring of foreign media. The purpose is to keep

track of misinformation and criticism of American policies and actions, and provide guidelines for synchronic response to public diplomats in the field. The Rapid Response Unit aims to restore the US' credibility, which is seen to have been undermined by the contradictory messages in the war on terrorism and the war on Iraq. Process efforts have also been set in place to weaken the negative image of the SD as an information-controlling institution, like giving ambassadors freer reins to give speeches without having to clear them with the SD first.

The strategic pillars 'empowerment' and 'education' underline the focus on *root causes* of anti-Americanism and terrorism, which is also a typical feature of the politicized discourse. A central project of the SD is the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), which was launched by President George W. Bush in 2002. Through more than 350 programs, MEPI supports indigenous organizations in the Middle East that are working to bring about structural and institutional reform in their own countries. The project addresses the following "obstacles" to development: political governance and participation, economic liberalization and opportunity, educational quality and access, and the empowerment of women. Karen Hughes has spent much effort on outreach tours to inform Middle Eastern audiences about MEPI and US aid.

Another aspect that situates the SD public diplomacy in a politicized discourse is the designation of the target audience. The target audience is people throughout the whole world (except in the US), not merely people in strategically important areas such as the Middle East. As illustrated by Nye's metaphorical three-dimensional chessboard of world politics, each game of power must be played simultaneously to succeed in military, economic or transnational issues. Not only Middle Eastern audiences, but also others like the European, have strong opinions about American actions in the war on terrorism, including information programs. A reason for marking a distance from propagandistic methods is the negative impact it has had on the public opinion throughout the world, including Europe. The use of propaganda in the war on terrorism has signalled that the US is abandoning its own ideals about freedom of expression and democracy, which renders the US less attractive to cooperate with for Europeans. Although several public diplomacy programs designated for Europeans exist, I have limited the analysis to efforts specifically directed to Muslim audiences.

A superficial comparison of the public diplomacy approaches of Charlotte Beers and Karen Hughes gives impression that the change is radical. Indeed, the change of approach is substantial, but it is important to note that the politicized part of Hughes' approach resembles much traditional public diplomacy, which was performed during Beers' era as well.

Exchanges and outreach tours, for instance, have been central strategies all along; the difference is the degree of priority. Neither were any of the Under Secretaries dictators of the public diplomats in the SD or in the field: experienced employees have ensured a continuance of traditional practices.

The significance of comparing the two eras is that the impact of the respective approaches to public diplomacy reveals how the geopolitical situation is defined and solution prescribed in the State Department. Whether a method is embraced or rejected depends on how the discourse defines its purpose. In public diplomacy circles, Karen Hughes' ideals and methods seem to have been embraced and those introduced by Charlotte Beers largely rejected.¹⁹ However, Karen Hughes' purpose of public diplomacy appears to have been contradictory: it appears to have juggled soft power with a narrower, securitized approach.

5.2.3 Securitized public diplomacy

The SD and the DoD have different roles in securitizing public diplomacy. In the SD, Karen Hughes started to regard public diplomacy as a security priority and hence strengthened its position. Simultaneously, tasks have been shifted from the SD to the DoD where other traditions and rules shape the discourse. It appears that Karen Hughes has had a firm hand in shifting the responsibility of public diplomacy.

In her departure press conference on 31 October 2007, Karen Hughes stated the link between public diplomacy and security. "I feel that I have done what Secretary Rice and President Bush asked me to do by transforming public diplomacy and making it a national security priority central to everything we do in government." According to public diplomats, the coordination process must have started after Donald Rumsfeld was replaced by Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense in December 2006, because Rumsfeld was not concerned with the "hearts and minds-issues" (Rugh, interview 26.2.2007).

In the past years, a number of articles in the US press have reported that political and military leaders are frustrated because the government does not have an integrated process for strategic communication in the war on terrorism. According to Brigadier General Eder in the U.S. Army, this frustration has been vented toward the DoD and the military services (Eder 2007). To counter the problem of unsynchronised information, Karen Hughes started a process for closer coordination and integration among various government agencies dealing

¹⁹ The rejection of Charlotte Beers' methods is somewhat overstated, but the nuances of this argument will be analysed in chapter 6.

with public information. The process of associating public diplomacy more with strategic communication, Eder argues, is transforming the way SD works (Eder 2007).

There are clear and distinct rules for governmental public diplomacy in the US. Since the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 banned the government from propagandizing domestic audience, there has been a practice of distinguishing formally between public diplomacy and public affairs. What distinguishes strategic communication from “the old stovepiped way of doing business”, according to Eder, is “formal cooperation among communicators” (Eder 63, 2007). In order to avoid mixed messages in the war on terrorism, a process of coordination between strategic actors has been initiated, which blurs the distinction between public diplomacy, public affairs and other strategic communication. This transformation is caused by the entrance of a securitized discourse in the SD: the purpose has been narrowed down to target the *security threat* of anti-Americanism. The exchange between the discourses can be explained with the notion *interdiscursivity*, which describes how borders between discourses move when fixed moments from one discourse enters another. In the politicized discourse, attempts to fix the meaning of ‘security’ in a narrow sense are gradually challenging the discourse. However, the controversy of the coordinating process indicates that the rule has yet to become conventional in the discourse.

A reason for the controversy among SD public diplomats to cooperate with the DoD on public diplomacy is that the respective institutions have different motives and methods. In the DoD discourse, the main challenges public diplomacy is designated to solve, is the information problem in the war on terrorism, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. The special nature of security enables discourses relying on its premise to justify extraordinary means to counter the threat. As the DoD motivation for engaging in public diplomacy is exclusively defined in terms of security, more diverse methods are considered legitimate. The overarching principle to deal with the problem is strategic communication, which aims to achieve specific goals with fewer restraints on the means. A public diplomacy officer who recently served in Iraq, Richard Schmierer, explained the military information effort as a more differentiated approach. People at the SD, he argued, have certain guidelines appropriate for their purpose. Because the SD does not per se fight wars, the information activities have to be completely transparent, credible and truthful. The same guidelines apply to DoD regular public affairs operations, but not necessarily to information operations for tactical purposes, and tactical warfare. Such information operations include paying local newspapers for publishing information without revealing the source. This information, Schmierer argued, must be truthful, but paint a helpful picture, like when a new school has been opened, the road has

been paved, or a clinic has been built. Tactical warfare can include untrue information, such as planting the word on the street that the US military has planted a spy in an enemy organisation to distract the enemy (Schmierer, interview 2.3.2007).

The fact that the DoD and the military's methods have not been saved from controversy clarifies some of their public diplomacy regulations. When DoD practice of buying media space for favourable information through Lincoln Group was revealed by LA Times in November 2005, it caused a heated debate in American and European press. According to a public diplomat to the Middle East, the DoD and White House also reacted negatively on the practice, but the practice of using Lincoln Group was never changed (Rugh, interview 26.2.2007). After an internal investigation, the DoD concluded officially that the practice was within their mandate (NTB 20.10. 2006). In comparison, the SD employed a similar technique with the mentioned campaign Shared Values Initiative in 2002, which I will analyse in chapter 6. Similar to the Lincoln Group practice, a root criticism of the campaign was that the SD covered the source. However, the SD did not conclude that the practice was within their mandate, but rather marked a distance from it. This comparison exemplifies how different rules apply to the SD and DoD public diplomacy discourses.

5.2.4 The Difficult Coordination Process

There is broad agreement in the PDWTE order of discourse that the contradictory messages in the war on terrorism have been a problem. Although efforts are made to streamline SD and DoD public diplomacy processes, a frequent complaint is that these agents are playing on too diverse strings.

There are so many cooks involved, so many agencies involved in framing an American message, and they can't agree on a message, because the bureaucracy has become so huge. Trying to get the State Department, the Pentagon, the National Security Council, various other interest groups to agree on a message, [...] they wouldn't know what to do (Brown, interview 23.2.2007).

The size of the bureaucracy is not the only issue at stake here. As already mentioned, some SD-affiliated public diplomats are unhappy with the DoD and the military's involvement in public diplomacy. The DoD has been called an "elephant in the room", "a bull in a china store", and its involvement in public diplomacy has been described as "It's like giving a loaded gun to a child!" Of course, this negative sentiment can be attributed to the defence of tribal cultures, but it should not be surprising that coordination of public diplomacy messages can be difficult when the purpose and the means profoundly diverge.

Some SD-affiliated public diplomats are upset with the DoD methods and literally feel that their own work is being undermined. One example is the practice of paying for media coverage:

“I was there, in Afghanistan, when journalists asked me, ‘Mr. Fernandez, when do we get our money?’ They were bribing journalists! We could never do something like that. For one thing, we don’t have that kind of money. For the other, it would have been a very bad idea” (Fernandez, interview 28.2.2007).

Although public diplomats experience difficulties with getting media coverage, they engage in a long-term relationship with journalists and editors and hence depend on credibility. For that reason, SD public diplomats are concerned that DoD practice is undermining the normal, “non-bribing way” (Schmierer, interview 2.3.2007). The concerns are that anything they get in the newspaper can be suspected for being there only because money changed hands, or that such practices contribute to the image of the US as a self-declared authority controlling information towards other countries. The DoD acceptance of such practices witnesses the differences in time frame as well as purpose of the respective institutions’ approaches.

The discourses share the premise that anti-Americanism constitutes a security threat, but diverge on which game of power the threat is situated in and hence what practices are strategically appropriate. Moreover, the rules of the discourses have been produced through different intertextual histories. The politicized discourse resembles what is called “traditional public diplomacy”, which has a long history of debating the appropriateness of different methods. Securitized and marketized discourses, however, have little intertextual history, and hence, their rules are only known by the reaction following their deviance. It should not be surprising if the coordination process of SD and DoD public diplomacy and strategic communication practices turn out to be difficult. The respective institutions are designated to target different challenges that require different considerations, and for the same reason, they have different messages to communicate.

5.3 Diverging Discourses – Clashing Messages

How the geopolitical threat of anti-Americanism is defined in a public diplomacy discourse affects which messages that will arise to explain and encounter it. The respective nodal points ‘security’ and ‘soft power’ in securitizing and politicizing discourses connote fundamentally different representations of the geopolitical ‘Other’, the *anti-American*. Exchanges of these representations inevitably clash: the geopolitical representation of a security threat requires a corresponding representation of an enemy, while the soft power approach aims to build bridges.

A central task of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism, in Charlotte Beers' as well as Karen Hughes' era, has been to challenge the tale of *clash of civilisations*. The 'clash of civilisations' theory was introduced by Samuel Huntington in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993²⁰ and has been established in different ways throughout the geopolitical culture. The 'clash-thesis' was developed within the pre-genre of formal geopolitics, and proposed that cultural and religious identities would be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world. A 'civilization' in this context refers to the highest rank of cultural identities. Huntington identified eight such civilizations in the world, mainly following religious lines: The African, Hindu, Western, Islamic, Sinic, Orthodox, Japanese and Latin American.

Huntington's thesis is heavily debated in academia, but has been exported as mainly an *image* to practical and popular geopolitics. On the journey from formal to practical geopolitics in the war on terrorism, the clash-thesis has changed connotations and refers to a clash between the civilization and the non-civilization. This representation has lingered with time: The first National Strategy for Combating Terrorism from February 2003 stated that, "The war against terrorism [...] is not some sort of 'clash of civilizations'; instead, it is a clash between civilisation and those who would destroy it" (Bush 2003, 29). On the President's Address to the Nation on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, the image was repeated: "This struggle has been called a clash of civilizations. In truth, it is a struggle for civilization. [...] We are now in the early hours of this struggle between tyranny and freedom" (Bush, 9.11.2006). The clash-thesis has also taken some hold in popular culture, but as popular geopolitics it has mainly been reduced to a metaphor, usually referring to a clash of binary civilizations. This is the clash-discourse that public diplomacy aims to challenge.

The clash-thesis constitutes fundamentally different *tales* in the politicizing and the securitizing discourses. According to the politicizing discourse, the diffusion of the tale itself constitutes a geopolitical threat, because it contributes to the idea that Muslim anti-Americanism is *natural*. When an idea is perceived as natural, it is severely difficult to counter. A State Department official argued that because Al Qaeda feeds off the concept of polarisation, a major public diplomacy task is to break that image. The problem is that people in the US and the West sometimes mirror the polarised discourse, he argued:

"This feeds into their idea of the conflict, this clash of civilization. That is why I always say on Arab media that 'I am against Huntington. I reject that idea. I don't

²⁰ The notion was first used by Bernard Lewis in 1990, but has since the formulation of the theory in 1993 been attributed to Huntington.

believe in a clash of civilizations. Because we're all part of the same civilization. The West is the child of the same civilization as Islam'" (Fernandez, interview 28.2.2007).

In other words: while the politicized discourse uses public diplomacy to build alliances, the Bush administration's definition of the war on terrorism as a clash between civilization and non-civilization counteracts the discourse.

In the politicized discourse, it is frequently argued that the very notion 'war on terrorism' is a public diplomacy challenge. One of the reasons is that the war on terrorism almost exclusively targets a certain kind of terrorism: Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. The problem is, according to a public diplomat who recently served in Iraq,

"when you mobilise your efforts worldwide against that threat, you're mobilising them against an Arab/Muslim threat. So you've got that natural conflict where you're doing what is appropriate security wise, but perception wise, it convinces some people in the Arab and Muslim world that it's actually not against terrorism but against Arabs and Muslims" (Schmierer, interview 2.3.2007).

The representation of the war on terrorism as a war on Muslims is according to SD public diplomats also mirrored by the DoD and military's practices. A SD public diplomat gave this example: "In Guantanamo two Saudi prisoners committed suicide. Then, this US military official called it a terrorist act, that they had killed themselves. Can you imagine? We had to clean up that mess!" (Fernandez, interview 28.2.2007).

The reason for the warnings from the politicized discourse against the equation of terrorists and Muslims is that it enlarges the group that potentially could identify themselves as terrorists. Public diplomacy is designated to target the demand-side of terrorism, which is ordinary people's inclination to sympathize with terrorist groups because they perceive the US as a worse alternative.

A basic problem is that a message that makes sense in one discourse has different implications in another. Securitized public diplomacy is founded on the idea that the US is threatened, and this idea necessitates a representation of a conflict and an enemy. In politics and military discourses in the war on terrorism it makes sense to talk about 'us' and 'them' and to present certain groups as enemies, because it stimulates domestic support. The geopolitical representation of the Muslim as the anti-American, however, simultaneously represents the American as *anti-Muslim*.

In chapter 6, I will analyse an example of a SD public diplomacy campaign that aims to deconstruct the image of a natural conflict between Americans and Muslims. But first, I

will analyse the politicized and securitized discourses' relative establishment in the 'public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era' (PDWTE) order of discourse.

5.4 The Relative Power of the Diverging Discourses

There is a broad agreement in the US government that anti-Americanism should be countered with coordinated strategic communication. According to public diplomats, there has been an increased focus on perception since the earlier stages of the Iraq war, when the primary focus was on the military side. However, the increased attention on perceptions and strategic communication has also changed the focus on public diplomacy. Two contradictory, yet concomitant, processes seem to be occurring simultaneously: an overall securitization of public diplomacy and a purification of the politicized discourse.

DoD involvement in public diplomacy has until recent years officially been limited. In 2001, the distribution of responsibility for public diplomacy between SD and DoD was in a report by the Defense Science Board Task Force on Managed Information Dissemination (DoD 2001), described as follows:

“DoD public diplomacy is comprised of strategic actions such as deployment of troops and ships for combined training or demonstration of resolve, official visits, and defense and military contacts with foreign officials. However, there is no one within DoD specifically tasked to plan or conduct PD activities even though DoD possesses enormous potential to influence foreign audiences through an organized and coordinated PD program. [...] The State Department is the primary Government agency responsible for the conduct of PD.”

What should be noted from this October 2001 report is that the DoD performed public diplomacy without any coordinating unit, and that SD was acknowledged as the primary agency responsible for public diplomacy. In 2006, DoD declassified a new strategic direction, approved by the Deputy Secretary of Defense in 2003. This direction, proposed in the QDR Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap, seeks to achieve three overarching objectives: (1) “Define roles and develop strategic communication doctrine for the primary communication-supporting capabilities: public affairs, information operations, military diplomacy, and defense support to public diplomacy.” (2) “Resource, organize, train, and equip DoD primary communication support capabilities.” (3) “Institutionalize a DoD process in which strategic communication is incorporated in the development of strategic policy, planning, and execution” (Eder 2007). Following this roadmap, the DoD established a Strategic Communication Integration Group (SCIG). This shift of ambitions for DoD public diplomacy indicates that the DoD position as a public diplomacy perpetrator has been

significantly strengthened between 2001 and 2006 and increases its relevance in the PDWTE order of discourse.

Although there is a broad agreement that public diplomacy is important in the war on terrorism and DoD resources for this task have been strengthened, the SD public diplomacy discourse is still struggling for recognition. When Karen Hughes entered the SD, it was expected that the status of public diplomacy would improve because the Under Secretary was close to the president. Still, according to the Director for Public Diplomacy for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in the State Department, Alberto Fernandez; the State Department finds that the Congress has a hard time understanding what public diplomacy is. “It’s easier for parliaments to approve money for national defence than, people understand that, ‘defend the motherland’, than to do ‘What, with foreigners? What are you doing with them? You’re giving them money to do *what?*’” (Fernandez, interview 28.2.2007). The result is, Fernandez argued, that the SD is not getting enough tools to do public diplomacy: “I just took a budget cut for our embassies that are doing this work of half a million dollars, so instead of having more money, [...] they have less money to do this. Even though this problem is bigger in that region than it was before.” Fernandez estimated that the total SD spending on public diplomacy is about 800 million dollars. “That’s 800 million dollars,” he said, “but it’s nothing compared to how much money the Pentagon spends. The Pentagon has billions and billions of dollars” (Fernandez, Interview 28.2.2007). Another sign that SD public diplomacy does not correspond with the Congress’ stated aims for the war on terrorism is that the Middle East according to Fernandez is “not favoured over other parts of the world” when it comes to funding, although the problem of anti-Americanism is worse in that region (Fernandez, interview 28.2.2007).

Fernandez is not the only SD-affiliated person who is concerned with how funding for public diplomacy has shifted from SD to DoD. A former Foreign Service Officer to Muslim countries argued that the DoD is using the war in Iraq as an “open wedge” to expand into public diplomacy operations (Rugh, interview 26.2.2007). However, he argued, the purpose of this expansion is unclear. Another former Foreign Service Officer found that most people working for the DoD were not really interested in public diplomacy, but “because of the pressure about the minds and hearts, from Congress and other American spheres of influence that the Pentagon felt that it had to get into the hearts and minds game war” (Brown, interview 23.2.2007). Brown argued that SD public diplomacy people have been warned that the money for public diplomacy activities in the future will go to DoD. This duality is interesting: on the

one hand, there has been an increased focus on ‘hearts and minds’, but the institution traditionally designated for the task is increasingly excluded in favour of another.

According to John Stauber, the director of the Madison-based Center for Media and Democracy (CMD), which publishes critical literature on public diplomacy, the DoD employs arguments that resonate better with the Bush administration. Stauber has observed a split between public diplomacy people in the SD and the “war on Iraq-people” in the lead up to the Iraq war and up to today. Before the military intervention in Iraq, Stauber argued, Rumsfeld and Cheney “were on war” with Colin Powell and the public diplomacy types, and the latter lost that round (Stauber, interview 12.2.2007). Sheldon Rampton from the same institution (CMD) characterised these two viewpoints on American foreign policy as follows:

“the public diplomacy people in the SD come from a philosophy, which focuses on the need to be diplomatic and try to cultivate friends. The Bush administration, on the other hand, fundamentally believes that hard power is the only real power, and that if you press your adversaries, their hearts and minds will fall” (Rampton, interview 12.2.2007).

Although this polarisation is intentionally overstated, it gives an impression of the discursive struggle. The relevance of the split is that the SD depends on the Bush administration and Congress for allocation of resources for public diplomacy. In order to get sufficient funding, the public diplomacy discourse needs to correspond with the Congress’ perception of its purpose and utility. Towards the Congress, the securitized discourse is relatively stronger. However, the audience supporting the securitization of the discourse is not only the Congress, but also the agents involved. The practices of intentionally shifting tasks from the SD to the DoD and coordinating tasks to increasingly resemble DoD methods witness a securitizing effect on Karen Hughes’ approach to public diplomacy.

The securitization process of the PDWTE order of discourse is occurring on two levels: firstly, tasks are shifted from SD to DoD, and secondly, the rules of public diplomacy change due to the redefinition of its purpose.

That being said, claiming that public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era has become uniformly securitized, would be an overstatement. The incorporation of the notion of ‘order of discourse’ in the security analysis opens the categories to explain the disintegrated succession of the securitization process. Simultaneously with the securitization of public diplomacy, the politicized discourse has within its own boundaries increasingly legitimised its position. Karen Hughes has at the same time purified the politicized discourse and validated different spaces for marketized and securitized public diplomacy. This purification may

enhance the SD credibility without precluding the variety of methods for performing public diplomacy. However, when the methods applied and the messages to communicate diverge profoundly, the question is whether these can be compliant or the securitized discourse will undermine the politicized in the end. The effect of the coordination may very well be a successful sensitisation of the DoD information practices, but it is unlikely that the DoD changes the premise of its public diplomacy discourse, since it is firmly rooted in the mandate of the institution.

5.5 The Geopolitical Rationale of Public Diplomacy in the PDWTE

Three aspects explain the geopolitical rationale of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era (PDWTE). The **first aspect** concerns what geopolitical representations that form the premises of this order of discourse, which I have argued is anti-Americanism and the geopolitical vision it is associated with. Various discourses struggle for the definition of the geopolitical situation, labelled politicized, securitized and marketized discourses according to how they construe the representation of anti-Americanism. The discourses share the premise that anti-Americanism constitutes a security threat, but diverge on which game of power the threat is situated in and hence what considerations should be incorporated in the strategy to counter it. In the politicized discourse, anti-Americanism is regarded as a threat to American soft power, which can only be won back with attractive means. In the securitized discourse, the threat is considered potentially existential against American territory and people as well as ideology, and should be countered with emergency measures. In the marketized discourse, anti-Americanism is situated in an economic game of power and constitutes a rather vague threat to American competitiveness and trade security. The game of power where the discourses are situated shapes the guidelines, or “rules”, for public diplomacy. This is the **second aspect** of the geopolitical rationale: how the geopolitical representations manifest in public diplomacy efforts, through the designation of appropriate institutions, means and messages.

The most central institutions involved in public diplomacy activities in the war on terrorism era are the State Department (SD) and the Department of Defense (DoD). Since 9/11, which was the catalyst of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era, the politicized, securitized and marketized discourses have had different functions in each institution. The discursive struggle about the geopolitical situation has manifested in a shift of resource allocations and tasks for public diplomacy from the SD to the DoD. In that sense, DoD, which largely produces a securitized discourse, has gradually strengthened its position as a public

diplomacy perpetrator. The SD discourse has since 9/11 been characterised by two shifts represented by the different Under Secretaries of State for public diplomacy and public affairs, Charlotte Beers and Karen Hughes. In Beers' era, a somewhat contradictory marketized and politicized discourse was produced within the SD. Hughes cultivated space for all three discourses by outsourcing tasks to the DoD and encouraging the private sector to involve in public diplomacy activities.

Because the respective institutions are designated to target different geopolitical threats that require diverging considerations, they consider the appropriateness of methods and messages differently. Concerning the methods for public diplomacy, there is a conflict between the politicized discourse, which requires the use of attractive means, and the other discourses, which have fewer restrictions. The geopolitical representation each discourse is founded on sometimes also produces contradictory messages. While securitized public diplomacy is founded on a representation of a conflict and an enemy, politicized public diplomacy aims to attract allies. This natural conflict relates to the **third aspect** of the geopolitical rationale of this public diplomacy era, the *output* of the discursive struggle.

The result of the marketized and securitized discourses' influence on public diplomacy involves that tasks have been shifted between agents and the rules of public diplomacy have changed due to the redefinition of their purpose. Simultaneously, the SD discourse has through the shifting of tasks defined its approach in negation to the securitized and marketized discourses and cultivated a soft power approach to public diplomacy. This double-edged process leaves a challenge for the future of American public diplomacy: to synchronise two strategies with profoundly divergent purpose, methods and messages.

In the following chapter, I will use the same questions to analyse a case, the public diplomacy campaign Shared Values Initiative from 2002. This campaign has been so much debated that it gives a unique insight in which methods and messages are considered controversial or acceptable.

6

SHARED VALUES INITIATIVE: CONTROVERSY AND GEOPOLITICAL VISIONS

The advertising campaign Shared Values Initiative from 2002 is without doubt the most debated public diplomacy effort in the war on terrorism era. Although the campaign is an early representative of this era, its continuing controversy reveals the rules and boundaries for the State Department public diplomacy discourse and makes it particularly interesting as a case. It has both politicizing and marketizing elements, and evolves in interplay with securitizing discourses. As an advertising campaign, the strategic nature of the message also highlights the geopolitics of the discourse.

The campaign was the brainchild of then Under Secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs Charlotte Beers, who resigned her post following the controversy. It combined traditional public diplomacy methods with advertising, a new genre in public diplomacy. The campaign included speeches by American Muslims and diplomats to international audiences, town hall events in several countries, Internet sites and chat rooms, the 60-page colour magazine *Muslim Life in America*, a series of newspaper and radio ads and five television commercials. Because the other elements have received far less attention, I will only focus on the television ad campaign, from hereon called the SVI²¹.

In this chapter, two aspects of the campaign will be discussed. Firstly, I will conduct a geopolitical discourse analysis of the film spots, to search for geopolitical representations embedded in their discourse, and how they manifest themselves. More specifically, these representations relate to the portrayal of central geopolitical subjects: Muslims and Americans. Secondly, I will discuss the controversy of the campaign, and analyse its role in the development of the order of discourse called ‘public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era’ (PDWTE): What does the debate about the campaign tell us about this order of discourse – what kinds of messages and methods are controversial and conventional? And what kind of power does the campaign execute? But first, I will briefly present the campaign and the

²¹ The SVI will interchangeably be called SVI and ‘the campaign’ when referring to the product and the infrastructure of its making, and ‘the ads’ and ‘the spots’ when referring to the discursive content.

analytical strategy employed. It can be useful to watch the spots or read the transcription of the Shared Values television commercials in the appendix before proceeding.²²

6.1 SVI as a Geopolitical Counter Discourse

The intention of the SVI campaign, according to internal State Department reports, was “to foster free, candid and respectful engagement and exchange between Americans and people from the Muslim world” (Fullerton and Kendrick 2006, 26). According to Under Secretary Charlotte Beers, Fullerton and Kendrick write, “the ultimate goal for the campaign would be ‘discussion and debate’, as opposed to changing minds about US foreign policy” (*Ibid*, 27). The target audience was “the people”, especially mothers and teachers in the target countries. In order to understand the target audience, Beers consulted a research tool called ValueScopeTM, which employs consumer research based on personal values. This research identifies 57 values that respondents are asked to rank in the order of personal importance. The 2002 ValueScopeTM research revealed several differences between the US and Muslim countries, but also significant agreement on values such as faith, family and learning. Based on these findings, Beers designed a campaign to focus on the shared values of Americans and Muslims. The work with the campaign started shortly after Beers was sworn in as Under Secretary in October 2001. Throughout Ramadan in 2002, the campaign was aired on state-run media systems in Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Kuwait. It was also available to viewers in Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates via pan-Arab satellite and in Kenya and Tanzania through embassy placement.

The campaign consists of five short ads, depicting American Muslims in their daily lives in the US. Their respective titles reflect the profession of the main characters: *Baker*, *Doctor*, *Teacher*, *Journalist* and *Fire fighter*. Each spot lasts for about two minutes, except the spot *Fire fighter*, which lasts for one minute. Visually, the spots are simple and look home-made. The stories are narrated mainly through the voice of one or two main characters, supported by images and music. Because the characters appear so determined about the subject under discussion, it seems like they either “answer” questions that they perceive the target audience to have, or even deliberately try to challenge a discourse they perceive as dominating.²³

²² The film spots can be downloaded from <http://www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/sharedvalues/commercials.aspx>

²³ Whether the questions actually stem from the characters or the producer is unclear. Although characters’ articulations appear to be personal, they may have been carefully directed, but neither do I find any indications of this nor is it important for the analysis.

I will employ an analytical strategy that I have developed with notions from Bakhtin, Young and Laclau and Mouffe, with emphasis on finding relations and boundaries between discourses through polyphony and negation. The operational research question is *why are the characters saying what they are saying?* A premise for this analytical strategy is that the ads do not operate in accordance with their own discursive conventions: they are a contribution to an already established discursive struggle. I understand the spots as a counter discourse to a perceived dominating discourse about the US in Muslim countries. When understood as such, the spots give access to two geopolitical discourses simultaneously: the Storyrealm, or the discourse of the film spots, and the imagined intertextual history that the characters “talk back” to, the Taleworld. The characters’ contribution is thus to a discursive struggle to prevent the thought adversary discourse’s hegemony. This makes their discourse polyphonic of the third kind: the characters draw their understanding from a discourse that is nowhere mentioned. Although the intentions of the campaign are beyond the scope of this analysis, it is hard to imagine that the campaign had been produced if no discourse had existed claiming that Muslims were badly treated in the US. Still, it should be noted that the findings of the forthcoming analysis are based on the analytical strategy rather than the intention of the filmmaker or articulator. I will not discuss the quality of the campaign, but rather look for the geopolitical representations the film spots reveal in their implicit representation of the others’ discourse.

6.2 The Geopolitical Tales of the SVI Spots

The significance of identifying the geopolitical representations of a public diplomacy campaign is not only of intrinsic value. Because geopolitical discourses give insight into how geopolitical *subjects* are understood in a geopolitical culture, it gives certain indications of how they are acted towards in the geopolitical order. This insight reveals the power structure between geopolitical subjects as well as the perceived geopolitical *purpose* of their relation.

I will now analyse each film spot in turn. The presented order is coincidental; they were aired independently and separately. I will focus on the main aspects of each spot in this paragraph and analyse the SVI ads as a whole in the next.

6.2.1 Baker: Relational Identities Based on Religion and Nationality

The first spot is about the Libyan Abdul Hammuda, who presents himself as “the owner of Tiger Lebanese bakery located here in Toledo, Ohio, the United States of America”.

The film spot starts with a happy Muslim family in a living room, singing and playing drums. Hammuda’s voice breaks in: “I believe American people in general respect the Islamic

faith. Muslims can practice their faith in totality here”. When applying the analytical strategy discussed above, regarding the articulations as an “answer” to an unmentioned discourse, what we understand from this is that he believes that the spectator might think the opposite: that Americans do not respect Islamic faith, and that Muslims can not practice their faith in the US. The articulation also reveals a construction of identity in relational terms: Muslims are a distinct group and different to American people. The implicitness of this representation indicates that it is discursively hegemonised from the Taleworld he draws his perspective from. Throughout the film spot, Hammuda continues to establish his own identity in negation to an American identity. Not only is he the owner of a bakery in the US, but a *Lebanese* bakery that also serves dishes from Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. Instead of, say, presenting his bakery as one of many different bakeries in town, Hammuda emphasises the *foreign* nature of his bakery. Hammuda’s family is also presented in the film spot. Together with Hammuda and his wife, their son and daughter work in the bakery. Not only the foreign identity is emphasized, but also the religious. A visual signifier of this is the *hijabs* on the women’s heads. Hammuda was also one of the co-founders of the Toledo Islamic Academy, “from pre-k to high school”. Hammuda: “Religious freedom here is something very important, and we see it practiced and no one ever bothered us.” With this articulation, Hammuda implies that the spectator would believe that Muslims are bothered for their religious practice. It is uncertain what Hammuda means by “we see it practiced”, whether he is referring to Muslims or other religious groups. But no other references to other religious groups are made. There are, however, references to other groups: customers and clients, from whom “we” (the Hammudas, I suppose) have enjoyed “an overwhelming sense of support” since 9/11. In other words, not only Hammuda self, but also the customers and clients associate the Hammudas with Islam (or other groups connected with the terrorist attack, but Islam is probably the closest call). Hammuda concludes the spot with: “America is a land of opportunity, of equality. We are happy to live here as Muslims and preserve our faith”. Again, he implies that a discourse exists that claims the opposite, and in addition to rejecting this view, he implies that this cultural “generosity” is not to take for granted. The Muslims, in this Storyrealm, are a distinct autonomous and tolerated group that, even when they live in America, is not American. Why Hammuda maintains this division can seem cryptic because he otherwise seems so well integrated in the American society. The ubiquitous visual and uttered representations of national and religious identity seem important for the ad’s message, and can indicate a polyphonic answer to a discourse accusing Muslim Americans of being assimilated and abandoning their native identity. Some of the other spots indicate the same.

6.2.2 Doctor: Assimilation and Universal Egalitarianism

The next spot is about the Algerian-born Dr. Zerhouni, the director of the National Institute of Health in America, a position to which he has been nominated by President George W. Bush. Zerhouni talks about what he calls a “profound connection” between medicine and Islam: “The notion that science can improve health has been borne out in Islam for many centuries. Some of the best doctors in the history of the world have been Muslim doctors.” The motivation behind these articulations can seem cryptic. Would a Muslim, the target audience, consider the relationship between Islam and medicine a contradiction? That is unlikely. “The mission of the National Institute of Health is to advance knowledge about the medical care and diseases that affect mankind,” Zerhouni proceeds. Because the intrinsic value of medical knowledge in Islam is already stated, this articulation connects Islam with the American institute, and the institution is already presented as deeply anchored in American politics. But is this a response to an idea that Muslim and American culture diverge on these issues? Not likely. It could be a reminder that the US and Islam have some shared values at all. But fetching farther in the logic of negation can also reveal a discourse of assimilation in Zerhouni’s Taleworld: that the discourse he is talking back to, assumes that Muslims in the US are Americanised, a discourse Zerhouni’s position as a successful doctor could be seen as confirming. There are further indications of such a polyphonic discourse in Zerhouni’s articulation: “When we develop a new treatment, it is available worldwide, so it impacts on the health of everyone on Earth.” The polyphonic “question” this could be an answer to, is whether the US employs foreigners only to serve Americans, or, whether the doctor’s motivation for working in the US are because he elevates the importance of the Americans’ health above that of others. Zerhouni continues to emphasize that his choice of becoming a doctor is not due to him being assimilated into American values: “I became very interested in medicine because I had an uncle who was actually a radiologist.” Following the logic of negation, Zerhouni’s articulations can be understood as (1) he wants to state the shared American-Muslim values of medical knowledge, and (2) to avoid being seen as another assimilated American, he emphasizes that these values originate in Islam and for himself, in his native country.

Zerhouni also talks about the universal egalitarianism of the American culture, and his experience with coming to the US in 1975: “I was totally embraced by people here, my professors. You know, everybody told me we are all immigrants here, we are all from different places, and we all melt together and I love that, I really do.” This articulation can be seen as a rejection of an idea that Muslims in America are socially excluded. But with this

articulation, he also partly breaks down the discourse of intrinsic difference that the other spots maintain. However, in his next articulation he maintains a division between Muslims and the American society when he highlights the particularity of this cultural integration: “What I can tell Muslims around the world is the tolerance and support I’ve received myself is remarkable. I don’t think that there is any other country in the world, where I think different people from different countries are accepted and welcomed as members of the society, as good citizens.” The hegemonic representation here is thus the *relevance* of the immanent difference between “different people from different countries”: it is reproduced as a natural division of the American society.

6.2.3 Teacher: Equivalence and Difference

The next spot is about Rawia Ismail, a female public schoolteacher from Beirut, Lebanon who has lived in the US since 1984.

Ismail talks about how it is like to wear a *hijab* in the classroom: “I’ve never met a child who thought it was weird or anything like that, and they like the fact, both them and their parents, that they are introduced to a different culture.” Implicitly, what we can read from this is the existence of a discourse that assumes the opposite, that Muslim symbols are met with incomprehension in the US and that people do not like differences. She also implies, like Hammuda does, that the local (American²⁴) culture is a distinct culture different to Muslim culture. Ismail also teaches her children in Saturday school, Islamic school. This is not a sign of difference between Ismail and the non-Muslims, but rather one of equivalence: “In my neighbourhood all the non-Muslims, I see that they care a lot about their children’s education, just as much as I do and about family values.” What she implicitly rejects with this articulation is an idea that Americans do not care about family values and children’s education. Her final remark in the spot is: “I had to work hard at getting the kids to understand that [...] we should work on our similarities rather than our differences”. This articulation can be an indication of the existence of two separate discourses she is talking back to: (1) the assimilation-discourse discussed above and (2) the inevitability of culture clashes between Americans and Muslims. First: the fact that she had to “work hard” at convincing the kids, and that she admits clear differences between the groups, could be a negation of a discourse claiming that Muslim children in America are assimilated and Americanised. Second, the use of past tense in the word *had*, reveals that the mission is accomplished and “working on our

²⁴ Ismail never mentions Americans as a group, only the United States, the non-Muslims and her neighbours, to all of which she contrasts herself and her religion. Because it is not always clear which group she is talking about, I will refer to it as “American” and hereby caution against the lack of specificity.

similarities” is thus not impossible. Drawn even further, this could be an answer to and negation of the previously discussed “clash of civilisations” discourse, but of course, the data does not support a conclusion of such specificity.

6.2.4 Journalist: Shared, Rather Than Imposed, Values

The next spot is about Devianti Faridz, an Indonesian Master’s student of broadcast journalism at the University of Missouri. She is concerned with shared educational values and religious tolerance.

“To become a journalist, of course, you have to uphold truth. You have to be honest; you have to be objective, and all those values I’ve already learned. [...] The values of Islam that I have been taught ever since I was a child are values that I have been exposed to here at school – honesty, truth, knowledge.”

The relevance of these articulations in an ad campaign for the US can seem unclear because they do not directly address the US or American values. Faridz does not talk about the similarities between Americans or the US and Islam, but the journalist school/profession and Islam. However, she has come to the US to study journalism and finds these values important there. What Faridz rejects in this articulation, are that the US has changed (Americanised) *her*, and given her new values: she implies that honesty, truth and knowledge are values shared between the respective cultures. And she proceeds: “I hope to be able to go back to Indonesia and become an objective journalist who can contribute to the betterment of society,” Faridz says, indicating that her stay in the US can help her cultivate these values.

The value of religious tolerance is also stated in the spot. Faridz looks like a typical integrated American in her casual Western style. Then suddenly, she is in the mosque praying, wearing religious clothing. “So far,” she says, “the American students I have met have respected my beliefs”. Again, this indicates the existence of a discourse claiming the opposite. However, the use of the words “so far” also indicates that Faridz does not take this respect for granted. Rather, there is a latent scepticism to the current situation in her assessment of how people *should* perceive difference: “We should embrace diversity and differences, and not be afraid of them.” Faridz concludes with an optimistic remark: “It is nice to know that Americans are willing to understand more about Islam, and there is an opportunity for understanding.” This articulation is ambiguous, and can be seen as a double-rejection of (1) an idea that Americans are unwilling to understand or (2) ignorance of the opposite fact.

6.2.5 Fire fighter: Associated Religion and Collective Guilt

The final spot is shorter than the others and has two main characters: Farooq Muhammad, a paramedic for a fire department in New York, and Abdul Malik, a volunteer chaplain with the MT Police department. Muhammad talks about how it is like having co-workers with different faiths, like Jewish, Christian, and Hindu:

“We get along fine. You know, we treat each other with respect. They have all been supportive of me since the 9/11 attack and I have been very grateful for that. I have never gotten disrespected because I am a Muslim. [...] We are all brothers and sisters and here I am as a human being taking care of another.”

These articulations indicate, like the similar analyses from above, the existence of a discourse about religious (Muslim) intolerance in the US. Although Muhammad dismisses this discourse, he upholds with his gratefulness that tolerance is *not to be taken for granted*. This ambiguity maintains a separation between groups and may indicate a sense of Muslim collective guilt against the rest caused by 9/11 and a latent cultural conflict. It is interesting that Mohammad as well as Hammuda and Ismail²⁵ define themselves in positive relation to 9/11 just because the terrorists were Muslim coreligionists. The fact that they as Muslims have internalised a representation of the “Muslim” with “terrorist” as a moment in the chain of equivalence reveals a strong bond of religious identity and sense of collective guilt.

Malik talks about working for “those who are putting their lives on the line each and every day to protect the citizens of this nation”, and emphasises the religious nature of his work:

“It is my responsibility to do whatever I can, whether that is offering counselling or spiritual guidance or words of acknowledgement of the hard work they are doing. [...] I think Muslims in America have more freedom to work for Islam, perhaps more than any country that I have visited.”

The negation of these articulations could be a discourse about the US being a godless community with little opportunity for religious establishment. Malik implies that US not only is an ideal place for Muslims, because the society facilitates Islamic practices, but that it even tops the “list” of countries worthy of deserving Muslim sympathy.

²⁵ Ismail also talks about the lack of prejudice after 9/11, but I have not addressed it in the text.

6.2.6 Summary

I have in the analysis of the spots focused on the following aspects: the relationship between Americans and Muslims, similarities and differences between their respective identities, the shared values of family, education, knowledge, honesty and truth, the universal egalitarianism and the opportunity of religious establishment in the American society, and religious tolerance in the US. Some of these elements are challenged, others carried on.

The analytical findings are summarised in the model below: how the Storyrealm represents the Taleworld's and its own understanding of Americans, Muslims in America and the relationship between these. Numbers in brackets indicate the spots in which the representations are present.

Relationship Americans and Muslims in America		Muslims in America		Americans	
Storyrealm	Taleworld	Storyrealm	Taleworld	Storyrealm	Taleworld
Distinct, different groups (1-5)	Distinct, different groups (1-5)	Maintain religious faith, practices and symbols (1-5)	Abandon religious faith, practices and symbols (1-5)	Religious tolerance (1-5)	Religious discrimination (1-5)
Peaceful co-existence (1-5)	Inherent culture clash (1-5)			Willing to learn (3,4)	Incomprehension (3,4)
Allies (1-5)	Muslims either excluded or Americanised (1-5)	Associated with 9/11 (1,3,5)	Associated with 9/11 (1,3,5)	Universal egalitarianism (2)	Americans above the rest (2)
Shared values: Knowledge (2,3,4), education (3,4), truth (4), family (3), community (3,5)	...	Integrated/foreign (1-5)	Either assimilated/ Americanised or excluded (1-5)	Family- and community oriented (3)	Individualistic (3)

Figure 6.1: The Re-mapping of Geopolitical Identities in the SVI

The representation of the American in a logic of difference to the Muslim is established in the ads' Taleworld and carried on and hegemonised by the Storyrealm. However, some moments are challenged: the idea that an inherent culture clash exists between Americans and Muslims, and that Muslims are either excluded from the society or assimilated. Rather, the spots reinstate that the two groups live in peaceful co-existence, and that there is an active relation between them. The shared values introduced in the Storyrealm do not seem to "talk back" to the Taleworld, and are thus represented as new elements.

In the next paragraph, I will analyse the geopolitical rationale of the campaign's portrayal of the relation between Muslims and Americans.

6.3 Geopolitical Alliances in the SVI Spots

What do we understand from the SVI's representation of Americans and Muslims? We can conclude from the analysis that the relationship between Americans and Muslims is represented as mutually exclusive and peacefully co-existent, but does it also indicate a power structure of responsibilities and privileges? I will in the following analyse the ads' construction of the geopolitical relations.

Three geopolitical subjects are represented in the ads. These are (1) the not-assimilated, American well-integrated Muslims, represented by the characters (2) the imagined Muslim spectator and/or supposed originator of the Taleworld discourse, and (3) the Americans, who exist only in the ads' Taleworld. Between these three geopolitical subjects, two consolidations of groups take place: the characters with the Muslim audience they are reaching out to, and this united Muslim identity with the Americans. The natures of the respective groups differ profoundly: What consolidates the Muslims as a group is a matter of *equivalence*, while what consolidates the Muslims and the Americans is a matter of *alliance*.

The Muslims are united in a logic of equivalence to essential Muslim identity markers discussed above and to the 9/11 attack, and the unity of the group is further consolidated in a logic of difference to Americans. Although the characters are *American Muslims*, the identity of the Muslim is constructed in *distinction* to that of the American: they remain distinct, different groups and are decidedly not assimilated. This logic of difference is interesting because the two groups are not mutually exclusive: they do not represent two different nationalities or religions, but one religion and one nationality. No references to other religions are made. The spots do not juxtapose the American with, say, the Christian, but rather represent it as a *place* and a *people*. Still, this place/people (USA/Americans) is understood in the negative terms of the religion/religious group (Islam/Muslims).

Despite the insistence on maintaining the division between Americans and Muslims: the fact that Muslims are chosen to tell "America's story" and their emphasis on shared values and peaceful co-existence construes the relationship between the groups as mutually beneficial. Because the distinction between the groups remains, the depicted Muslims are not understood as Americans, but rather as allies of America. These findings raise interesting questions. What can we understand from this discursive remapping of geopolitical subjects? What is the rationale behind fixating such an alliance in the first place?

What the fixation of geopolitical allies entails is also a question about what alliances *are*. Alliance building can have multiple associations, like relations between states or companies, even marriages between people and families. Typical representations of interstate

alliances, as discussed in the theory chapter, are that they are formed when confronted by an external threat, which they encounter by bandwagoning or balancing the threat. Any alliance, like the Muslim-American in the SVI, implies an allegiance against something external, and because the US represents itself as a source of peace rather than danger, the nature of this alliance seems to be to balance the external threat rather than bandwagon. Interestingly, the construed alliance is not between Americans and Muslims against terrorists: The representation of the 9/11 terrorist attack remains unchallenged as a moment on the Muslim chain of equivalence. The Muslims are not asked to cut off their bonds with their terrorist co-religionists: they are asked to feel collective guilt, and the extension of this collective guilt is to give the US moral superiority. The external threat is thus not terrorism, but rather *not being an ally* with the US.

Another theory of alliance formation is ideological solidarity: the more similar states are, the more likely they are to ally. The emphasis on shared values in public diplomacy can be understood as an attempt to build alliances on an ideological foundation. This is interesting because an acknowledged source of the resentment towards the US in the Arab and Muslim world is the US' inclination to ally with repressive regimes. The US even united with jihadis in opposition to the Soviet regime during the Cold War. The focus on shared values in SVI campaign can be understood as an attempt to re-articulate the legitimacy of alliance building or to nuance the perspective on the US' intentions, which are frequently criticised for being calculating and selfish. But what does a legitimate alliance with the US involve? One indication lies in the campaign itself and how it makes use of the allegiance with the Muslim characters. The way it uses Muslims to speak on the US' behalf witnesses a demand for discursive loyalty: the allies are utilised as a buffer against hostile discourses. Such a discursive buffer can contribute to American security because the war on terrorism necessitates a discursive struggle: Al Qaeda largely depends on the dissemination of hostile discourses to gain public (and financial) support. The legitimacy of the alliance with the Muslim characters in the SVI originates from the mutually beneficial nature of their relation, represented by the characters' gratitude for being accepted as citizens. In the next turn, the legitimacy of the alliance depoliticises the relation and naturalises the fact that Muslims are utilised to disseminate American norms and perspectives rather than their own.

An acknowledged technique of the campaign was the use of Muslim opinion leaders in the US to reach out to opinion leaders in Muslim countries. The characters chosen to represent Muslims in America are identified by their respectable professions; the designated target audience was mothers and teachers. What the characters and target audience have in common

is a similar kind of authority: they are trusted people in their society. The doctor certainly mounts the eminence of the rest, but all-in-all, the characters appear as down-to-earth, not too-flashy fellow humans. This choice of characters and target audience suggests that the credibility of the messenger was seen as vital to the campaign. It was assumed that if the US State Department was identified as the source of the commercials, it could be regarded as propaganda and lose credibility. Therefore, in the spring of 2002, Charlotte Beers and the SD asked Malik Hasan, a Muslim retired medical executive, for help in creating a non-profit, non-partisan organization called The Council of American Muslims for Understanding (CAMU). Each ad was presented with the line “Presented by the Council of American Muslims for Understanding”. The intention of attributing the ads to CAMU was, according to Fullerton and Kendrick, “a strategic decision designed to enhance source credibility and make the message more believable” (2006, 31). Unfortunately for the SD, covering the source had the opposite effect of making the campaign more controversial, which I will discuss later.

What we can understand from the SVI’s representation of Americans and Muslims can be summarised as follows: Firstly, the Muslim is defined in *distinction* to the American and their relationship is one of *alliance*. Secondly, the rationale behind this relationship is to form an alliance against an external threat, which is *not being an ally* with the US. Thirdly, the relation is perceived as legitimate because it is beneficial for both parties, although the *moral superiority* belongs to the US. Fourthly, the legitimacy of the alliance depoliticises the relation and naturalises the use of Muslim opinion leaders to influence the public opinion in Muslim countries on the US’ behalf.

I will now turn to the controversy of the campaign, and analyse its role in the development of the PDWTE order of discourse.

6.4 Controversy Reveals the Rules of the Discourse

As discussed in chapter 5, there exists a discursive struggle about the practice of public diplomacy in the order of discourse described as the ‘public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era’ (PDWTE). Politicized, securitized and marketized discourses struggle for the definition of the geopolitical threat and which public diplomacy perpetrators, methods and messages are best designated to counter it.

Because the SVI campaign has received so much attention, a study of the debate gives insight into what methods and messages are considered legitimate and illegitimate *for* and *in* the SD public diplomacy discourse. The introduction of the advertising genre in the public diplomacy discourse is well described by Fairclough’s notion of marketization, but the

controversy shows that SD public diplomacy discourse was not ready for this process. I will in the following discuss the response to the campaign and analyse the rules of the discourse.

During and after the campaign, the SVI caused a heated debate in domestic and international news media; and academics, communications scholars, advertising executives, diplomats and government officials concluded with various arguments that the campaign was a failure. In the book *Advertising's War on Terrorism* (2006), Fullerton and Kendrick offer a systematic study of how the SVI campaign was received. Following quotes from foreign news media give a brief introduction to the response:²⁶

“Another Zionist propaganda tool”

“The campaign comes in conjunction with beating the drums of the Iraq war”

“The campaign caused incitement against US policy in several Islamic countries, including demonstrations denouncing US policy in Indonesia”

“A cynical campaign that insults the intelligence of the average Muslim”

“What we understand from this campaign is that Americans just need a small cloth to polish their image, and that's it!”

Two complaints dominated the debate. The first was that the campaign was considered as propaganda, and the second was that the campaign did not explain US foreign policy (Fullerton & Kendrick 2006, 36). In other words: the debate mainly evolved around the *genre* and what the campaign was *not* about – the message has largely escaped without controversy. I will analyse what is controversial and accepted in the discourse, to assess the campaign's function in the PDWTE order of discourse.

6.4.1 The Propaganda Controversy

To begin with the propaganda issue; this problem followed the campaign from its very initiation and remains to this day probably its closest connotation.

Inside the State Department, the SVI was from the beginning known as “Charlotte's project”, because Beers had full control of the project and final approval of the ads. Beers' Madison Avenue- and Uncle Ben's advertising background was frequently ridiculed in US mass media. Proclamations like “The notion that you can sell Uncle Sam like Uncle Ben's (rice) is highly problematic”, “Uncle Sam is harder to sell these days than Uncle Ben's ever was” and “to call our country a brand is to denigrate it in people's minds” (Fullerton & Kendrick 2006, 104), emphasized the scepticism of many to the very idea that the US could be reduced to a commodity for sale. Many SD people were unhappy with the SVI because the advertising situated genre associated public diplomacy too much with propaganda. The genres

²⁶ See Fullerton and Kendrick (2006) for original sources. In my study, these quotes merely form a tale the Storyrealm relates to, and hence the source is not relevant.

of propaganda and advertising are both situated in a discourse of domination and information control that usually are particularly negatively perceived when they are government sponsored. To avoid the propaganda label, the SD insisted on calling the spots “mini-documentaries” instead of ads, tried to have them aired outside of the normal commercial airtime and attributed the campaign to the Council of American Muslims for Understanding (CAMU). The technique of covering the source, called the ‘deflective source model’, is according to the leading propaganda scholars Jowett and O’Donnell (1999) associated with grey propaganda and disinformation. It was quickly revealed that the SD was the original source, and the mere use of this technique caused harsh criticism.

Another problem caused by the propaganda issue was the difficulties of airing the campaign. The State Department initially hoped to get free airtime in the Islamic countries, but ended up having to purchase airtime on international TV-stations, and furthermore, the state-owned stations in most countries completely refused to run the spots. Al Jazeera was initially positive to the campaign, but ended up boycotting it as well (Fullerton and Kendrick 2006, 34). The reason for this negative attitude towards the SVI, according to Beers, was probably that it was considered as propaganda (*Ibid*, 35). In other words, the propaganda issue followed the campaign and was seen by many as having an undermining effect.

As much as three studies have analysed the propaganda aspect of the SVI, and although they agree that the campaign has clear propagandistic features, the studies disagree about whether it is a problem. Patrick Lee Plaisance (2005) distrusts Beers’ stated purpose of the SVI, to foster dialogue, and suggests that the campaign’s propagandistic nature reveals a different objective. The mere use of propaganda, in Plaisance’s opinion, shows that the campaign has “serious ethical shortcomings” (Plaisance 2005, 251). Sheldon Rampton at the Center for Media and Democracy posted a blog review about the SVI.²⁷ A main criticism in the article is what Rampton calls “monologue about dialogue”, because the campaign did not enable dialogue, hardly even on the official SVI website OpenDialogue.org. Rampton concludes that propaganda, in addition to being dishonest, fails the effectiveness test because it is incapable of creating genuine understanding. The only advocates of the campaign and its methods I have come across are the advertising scholars Fullerton and Kendrick (2006), who argue that the campaign could have been efficient if it was aired longer. Although they agree that the campaign has propagandistic features, Fullerton and Kendrick argue that it is

²⁷ <http://www.prwatch.org/node/6465>. Calling a blog review a “study” may seem somewhat ambitious, but the review adds to similar writings from the same author, like the book *Weapons of Mass Deception* from 2003, written together with J. Stauber.

generally truthful and therefore defensible. Just as interesting as how negatively propaganda is perceived, is how critics seem to agree that *dialogue* is the better choice of method. Dialogue is considered ethical, genuine and effective for mutual understanding. This appears to me like a shortcut: there is no guarantee that dialogue is less manipulative than propaganda, even with the best of intentions. Although dialogue is a better facilitator for learning, it can also be a negotiation in which the strongest party is bound to lead and the weakest legitimises with its participation. Because the purpose of dialogue often is to come to an agreement, this communication situation necessitates willing parties in order to succeed, which requires a careful audience selection. The effect of such selected willingness can be to encourage compromise and facilitate a relaxed attitude towards the information in cases where a critical approach might be more beneficial for the weakest party.²⁸ In contrast, propaganda – at least when it is recognised as such – can have the effect of empowering the listeners as responsible for their own opinions, encouraging them to take sides. The point here is not to advocate propaganda as ethical communication, but exemplify how any form of communication can have positive or negative moral associations, which again affects the perception of the content.

The main problem for a public diplomacy campaign with being associated with propaganda is that the genre itself and the credibility associated with the situated genre, affect how the message is framed by the spectators. When a message is framed as propaganda in a Storyrealm (here referring to the spectators), the meaning attributed to the genre “leaks” to the Taleworld (the message). If the spectators dislike propaganda, and the message is framed as such, the effort can be counterproductive.

That being said, the campaign’s genre is not only inefficient as an instrument for power. Although the advertising genre in terms of *credibility* does not do the campaign any favours, its “popular” expression depoliticises its message. As a result, the content escapes attention and remains unchallenged. In the case of the SVI, this seems only partly to be the case. On the one hand, the campaign has been debated and highly controversial. But despite the controversy, the content of the campaign has largely circumvented analysis: the focus on the campaign has mainly been on its naïve propagandistic features.

6.4.2 The Message Approval

As mentioned, the second dominating controversy was what the campaign did *not* explain. There are two ways of analysing the status of a message in a discourse: through what is said

²⁸ For a thorough debate about the ethics of dialogue and propaganda, see Stoker and Tusinski (2006).

about it, and through what is *not* said about it. Considering the large amount of literature written about the SVI campaign, strikingly little has been mentioned about its content. One of the chief complaints was that the focus of the campaign was off-target: people blamed America's tarnished image on US foreign policy, not on how Muslims are treated in America (Fullerton & Kendrick 2006, 105).

There seem to be a broad agreement that the message of the campaign is legitimate, and the relationship between Americans and Muslims is portrayed accurately. It has been mentioned that the campaign is a selective representation of reality, since post-9/11 persecution and incarcerations of Muslims have been reported (Plaisance 2005). However, the portrayed relationship between Muslims and Americans in the SVI has hardly evoked any debate. Rather, even critics of the campaign have emphasized that religious tolerance is an accurate description of the situation for Muslims in the US. Another tale that is nowhere challenged is the tale about desired division: that Muslims as well as Americans wish to keep their identities separate. This apparent agreement can be seen as an indication that the portrayal of the relationship is representative of critical as well as practicing public diplomacy discourses.

The acceptance of the message demonstrates its soft power, even as a geopolitical tool. As a form of popular geopolitics, the campaign is situated in the power structure of the broad geopolitical culture. An important function of popular geopolitics is to establish a beneficial point of discourse and create a "smooth space" for practical geopolitics. This form of power is essentially soft: it attracts and co-opts people to change preferences rather than it coerces them. The campaign does not ask people to change; it merely advocates a perspective on the desirable form of Muslim-American relations. If it succeeds, the campaign will establish an American point of discourse in the popular culture that over time materialises in the target countries' foreign policies or other spheres beneficial to the US, such as perspectives on terrorism *et cetera*. I do not mean to suggest that this is necessarily negative, but history has shown that this kind of naturalised geopolitics can be highly powerful.

6.5 The Standing of the SVI in the Public Diplomacy Culture

The controversy of the genre and the acceptance of the message highlight some of the boundaries of the 'public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era' (PDWTE) order of discourse. I will argue that the advertising situated genre marks a boundary between politicized and marketized public diplomacy discourses, and the message marks a boundary between politicized and securitized discourses.

Genre		Message	
Politicized	Marketized	Politicized	Securitized
Karen Hughes	Charlotte Beers	SD	DoD

Figure 6.2: The Accept and Rejection of the Genre and Message

Because the advertising genre traditionally has belonged to the discourse of the market, its introduction in the public diplomacy discourse marks a change in the traditionally governmental discourse. However, the advertising genre has not taken hold in the SD public diplomacy discourse. The genre is in a political context heavily associated with propaganda and has since Charlotte Beers' era largely been dismissed as a public diplomacy method in the SD discourse. Other marketized processes, however, have since then occurred: outsourcing public diplomacy tasks from DoD has been officially accepted, and the SD is increasingly encouraging businesses to engage in public diplomacy activities. As discussed in chapter 5, private actors have fewer restrictions on available methods for public diplomacy and strategic communication. It is thus not the marketization of public diplomacy as such that has encountered such controversy, but rather the governmental fingerprints on propagandistic methods.

The SVI campaign is an effort to engage in dialogue with Muslims about the nature of the relationship between Americans and Muslims. It can be seen as an expression of the politicized discourse's attempt to turn back the "clash of civilisations" discourse, as discussed in chapter 5, although it does not specifically refer to that notion. The fact that the notion is not used, however, does not mean that its geopolitical representation cannot be present. A typical feature of popular geopolitics is the tendency to depoliticise geopolitical discourses by simplifying the message and covering its motivation. However, the campaign's rather apparent message that Americans and Muslims exist in peaceful co-existence witnesses the same motivation: to split up potential tensions between the groups and attract the audience with soft power. This motivation situates the campaign in the politicized discourse about public diplomacy and demonstrates its potential conflict with the securitized discourse. The securitized discourse rests on a geopolitical representation of a security threat that requires a corresponding representation of an enemy, while the soft power approach aims to deconstruct this idea.

Although the campaign was made in the earlier days of the war on terrorism era, much of the development of the State Department approach to public diplomacy is well exemplified with the SVI and its reputation. Concerning the method of the campaign, the advertising genre has not only been outmoded, it has been actively rejected. The message, however, has

simultaneously been carried on and blurred by a different practice. On the one hand, the soft power discourse of alliances remained central in Karen Hughes' public diplomacy principles (engagement, exchanges, education and empowerment), dialogic ideal and projects such as outreach tours and the Rapid Response Unit. On the other hand, the process of coordinating information practices with the DoD witnesses a securitization process of public diplomacy.

Because the coordination process of American public diplomacy is still occurring and the role of DoD still immature, the development is at this moment hard to predict. However, the outcome of coordinating such contradictory approaches is an interesting starting point for future studies of American public diplomacy.

7

CONCLUSIONS

The subject of this thesis is the *geopolitical rationale of American public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era*. A ‘geopolitical rationale’ is a theoretical concept that refers to spatial-political networks of power embedded in reasoning and practices. As the thesis shows, American public diplomacy is not a uniform concept, but has developed through competing geopolitical discourses, and this observation explains some of the confusion concerning its purpose and practice. The discourses represent diverging, and often contradictory, public diplomacy practices in the war on terrorism. I have labelled these discourses *securitized*, *marketized* and *politicized* in accordance with how they construe the geopolitical threat, which again determines what considerations should be taken into account for countering it.

In this thesis, I have analysed the geopolitical rationale of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era (PDWTE) through three aspects, which I will summarise in this chapter. The first aspect concerns what geopolitical representations form the premises of this order of discourse. The second aspect relates to how the geopolitical representations manifest in public diplomacy efforts, through designation of appropriate institutions and choice of means and messages. The third aspect explains the changes and contradictions of public diplomacy practices in the war on terrorism era, or the *output* of the discursive struggle. The objects of analysis have been a discursive struggle, comprising ideas and practices of public diplomacy in the war on terrorism era, and a case, the public diplomacy campaign Shared Values Initiative. Crudely, the analysis of the discursive struggle can be summarised as follows:

	1. aspect: representation of anti-Americanism	2. aspect: manifestation	3. aspect: output
Politicized	Soft power threat	Counter clash, attractive means	Contradictory means and messages, Discursive change, Shifting of tasks
Securitized	Security (Existential) threat	Clash, any means	
Marketized	Economic threat	Private sector involvement, marketing means	

Figure 7.1: Summary of the discursive struggle

To explain the geopolitical rationale of the different approaches, it is useful to start with the first aspect, their discursive premises. Each discourse advocates public diplomacy as a

response to the geopolitical threat of *anti-Americanism*. The idea of anti-Americanism is essentially geopolitical because it represents a power structure by which the US in one way or another is threatened by the outside world. Although the term as such remains unchallenged, the implication of the threat is construed differently by each discourse. In the politicized discourse, anti-Americanism is regarded as a threat to American soft power, in the securitized discourse it is regarded as a (potentially existential) threat to American security, and in the marketized discourse, it represents an undefined threat to American competitiveness and trade security. The perceived implication of anti-Americanism situates the threat in a game of power, which shapes the guidelines, or “rules”, for public diplomacy as a means to counter it. The rules of the securitized, politicized and marketized discourses are respectively structured around ‘security’, ‘soft power’ and ‘economic’ rationales. In a securitized discourse, the emergency element calls for short-term measures, with little consideration for other potential costs. In the politicized discourse, the threat of anti-Americanism involves a threat to American influence on all levels of the three-dimensional chess game of world politics – military, economic and transnational issues – to the extent that they depend on soft power. A particular concern in the war on terrorism is that the declining soft power contributes to an increasing popular support of Islamist terrorism. The consideration for soft power makes the issue highly complex and the rules for public diplomacy rather intricate: Any action must take the potential loss of soft power into account, in the long term as well as the short. These rules, based on the perception of the geopolitical threat of anti-Americanism, are closely linked to the second aspect of the geopolitical rationale: the designation of institutions to perform public diplomacy and choice of appropriate methods and messages.

Chief institutions involved in public diplomacy activities in the war on terrorism era are the State Department (SD) and the Department of Defense (DoD). As I have shown in this thesis, the DoD mainly builds its public diplomacy practices on a securitized discourse, while the SD practices have elements from politicized, securitized and marketized discourses. The rules of these discourses have been analysed through the reaction on their practices from public diplomacy circles, which is often based on the reaction from external critics or the target audience, and whether the reaction has resulted in a change of practice.

Concerning the choice of appropriate methods for public diplomacy, there is a conflict between the politicized discourse, which requires the use of uncontroversial means, and the other discourses, which have fewer restrictions. Two examples have been discussed: the practice of covering the source of public diplomacy/information operations, and the use of propaganda. Both practices have caused a heated debate about the practice of the respective

institutions: in the SD following the Shared Values Initiative (SVI) and in DoD following the practice of paying for media coverage through Lincoln Group. However, the subsequent reactions witnessed a difference in the public diplomacy discourses between these institutions: While the SD marked a distance from the practice of covering sources, the DoD concluded that it was within its mandate. Both examples reflect the rules of the respective discourses and their institutional manifestation. The controversy in the SD witnesses the impact of the politicized discourse, whose purpose of public diplomacy is to counteract the geopolitical threat of losing soft power. The acceptance of the DoD practice, on the other hand, indicates the impact of the securitized discourse: the geopolitical threat is considered urgent enough to tolerate practices that are negatively perceived in public diplomacy circles and among the target audience.

Concerning which messages are considered appropriate, the clash of the practices is more obvious and its impact on public diplomacy is more substantial. How the geopolitical threat of anti-Americanism is defined in a public diplomacy discourse also affects which messages are being used to encounter it. The respective ‘security’ and ‘soft power’ imperatives in securitizing and politicizing discourses connote fundamentally different representations of the geopolitical ‘Other’, the *anti-American*. Exchanges of these representations inevitably clash: the geopolitical representation of a security threat requires a corresponding representation of an enemy, while the soft power approach aims to build bridges. The discussed SVI campaign and the idea of “clash of civilisations” that the politicised discourse aims to counter are good examples of this dilemma. This representation is particularly present in the war on terrorism, which is often associated with the idea of a civilizational conflict. In contrast, the politicized discourse particularly fears the equation of terrorists and Muslims because it enlarges the group that could potentially identify themselves as terrorists. Public diplomacy is, according to this approach, designated to target the demand-side of terrorism, which is ordinary people’s inclination to sympathize with terrorist groups in an alliance against the US. Public diplomacy officials associated with the SD actively try to challenge the representation of a conflict or clash of civilisations.

The SVI campaign is an example of the difficulties of engaging in this debate. It is based on the politicized discourse’s representation of anti-Americanism as a threat to American soft power, and its message to audiences in Muslim countries is that Americans and Muslims live in peaceful co-existence in the US. The SVI campaign is an effort to engage in dialogue with Muslims about the nature of the relationship between Americans and Muslims. The analysis shows that the campaign actively engages in dialogue with an idea perceived as

dominating in Muslim countries: that Muslims in the US are either assimilated or excluded. In response to this idea, the campaign reconstructs the geopolitical identities as representing a relation of alliances. The problem with this “counter clash” thesis is that it has contradictory elements. On the one hand, it defines the ‘Muslim’ in exclusive distinction to the ‘American’, and constructs the relation as one of alliance. On the other hand, the SVI’s maintenance that Muslims have some kind of collective guilt for the terrorist attacks on 9/11 suggests the external threat as *not being an ally* with the US. All the attempts to construct the identity of Muslims in the US in a way presumably appealing to Muslims end up with giving the *moral superiority* to the US. That being said, such a reading of the film spots requires the approach of a devil’s advocate. But this warning is necessary in the discursive climate of the war on terrorism, where well-intended public diplomacy campaigns easily can be undermined by other actions, including conflicting public diplomacy practices.

Because securitized, politicized and marketized discourses all contribute to the total production of public diplomacy, their contradictory means and messages contribute to producing each other’s discursive context, or Storyrealm, wherein the message is consumed. In that sense, the manifestation of the geopolitical rationale is intimately related to the *output* of the discursive struggle. In addition to producing contradictory messages, the output relates to the shifting of tasks between institutions and discursive change.

In the PDWTE order of discourse, three different processes are occurring simultaneously, called securitization, politicization and marketization. Securitization is the most obvious process. The discursive struggle about the geopolitical situation has manifested in a shift of resource allocations and tasks for public diplomacy from the SD to the DoD. Since 9/11, the DoD involvement in public diplomacy has developed from merely supporting some of the SD initiatives to becoming an independent perpetrator with an institutionalised coordination unit. Simultaneously, there has been a steady shift of public diplomacy tasks from the SD to the DoD. The SD active contribution to this process witnesses a manifestation of the securitized geopolitical vision of anti-Americanism also in the SD. At the same time, the private sector is increasingly encouraged to engage in public diplomacy activities, producing a marketized discourse. Simultaneously, through the shifting of tasks, the SD discourse has defined its approach in negation to the securitized and marketized discourses and cultivated a soft power approach to public diplomacy. This double-edged process has caused much confusion among outsiders about the purpose of public diplomacy. However, this confusion should be recognised, as the geopolitical rationale of public diplomacy is inherently contradictory.

REFERENCES

- Agnew, J. & Corbridge, S. 1995. *Mastering Space. Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy*. Routledge, London
- Agnew, J. & Ó Tuathail, G. 1992. Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy. (eds) Dalby, S. Ó., Tuathail, G. & Routledge, P. *The Geopolitics Reader*. 1998. Routledge, London & New York, NY. 78-91
- Agnew, J. 1996. Mapping Politics: How Contexts Count in Political Geography. *Political Geography*, 15, 129-46
- Agnew, J. 2005. *Hegemony: The New Shape of Global Power*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, PA
- Allen, J. 2003. Power. (eds) Agnew, J., Mitchell, K. and Toal, G. *A Companion to Political Geography*. Blackwell, Oxford. 95-108
- Anderson, J. 2004. American Hegemony after 11 September: Allies, Rivals and Contradictions. Brunn, S. (ed.) *11 September and It's Aftermath: The Geopolitics of Terror*, 36-61. D. Frank Cass Publishers, London
- Børtnes, J. 1999. TRIBUNE, 9/1999, Skriftserie for Romansk Institutt, Universitetet i Bergen. (<http://www.hum.au.dk/romansk/polyfoni/Tribune9/borstnestrib.htm>) (accessed October 2007).
- Bush, G.W. 11 September 2006. President's Address to the Nation. (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060911-3.html>) (accessed November 2007)
- Bush, G.W. 31 January 2006. State of the Union Address by the President. (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2006/>) (accessed November 2007)
- Bush, G.W. 2003. *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*. (February 2003) (http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter_terrorism/counter_terrorism_strategy.pdf) (Accessed December 2007)
- Bush, G.W. 20 September 2001. Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11. Washington D.C. (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>) (accessed November 2007)
- Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J. 1998. *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., Colorado, CO
- Charmaz, K. 2003. Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) *Strategies for qualitative inquiry* 2nd ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 249-291.
- Dalby, S. & Ó Tuathail, G. 1998. Introduction. *Rethinking Geopolitics*. Routledge, London.
- Dalby, S. 1990. Social Theory and Security Discourse. *Creating the Second Cold War: The Discourse of Politics*, 4-16. Pinter Publishers, London.
- Defense Science Board. 2004. *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*. US Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense For Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. Washington, D.C.
- Defense Science Board. 2001. *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Managed Information Dissemination*. US Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. Washington, D.C.
- Dijkink, G. 1996. The National Experience of Place. *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions: Maps of Pride and Pain*. Routledge, London & New York, NY.
- Djerejian, E. 2003. Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World. Report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World. (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/24882.pdf>). (Accessed 17.10.2007.)
- Dyrberg, T.B., Hansen, A.D. & Torfing, J. 2000. (eds) *Diskursteorien på Arbejde*. Roskilde Universitetsforlag, Fredriksberg, Denmark.

- Eder, M.K. 2007. "Toward Strategic Communication" *Military Review* July-August 2007.
(<http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/JulAug07/Eder.pdf>) (Accessed December 2007)
- Fairclough, N. 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Fairclough, N. 1998. Political Discourse in the Media: An Analytical Framework. Bell, A. & Garrett, P. (eds) *Approaches to Media Discourse*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Fairclough, N. 2003. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. Routledge, London.
- Fullerton, J. & Kendrick, A. 2006. *Advertising's War on Terrorism: The Story of the U.S. State Department Shared Values Initiative*. Marquette Books, Washington.
- Gerges, F. A. 2005. *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y. S. 1989. *Fourth generation evaluation*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA
- Haraway, D. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The reinvention of Nature*. Routledge, New York, NY.
- Hughes, K. & Rice, C. 10.31.2007. Secretary Condoleezza Rice Announces Departure of Under Secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs Karen P. Hughes.
(<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/10/94414.htm>) (Accessed October 2007)
- Hughes, K. 2005. The Mission of Public Diplomacy. Testimony at Confirmation Hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. 22 July 2005.
(<http://www.state.gov/r/us/2005/49967.htm>) (Accessed October 2007)
- Huntington, S. 1993. Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*. 72:3, 22-49.
- Jansen, S. C. 2005. Foreign Policy, Public Diplomacy, and Public Relations: Selling America to the World. Artz, L. & Kamalipour, Y.R. (eds) *Bring 'Em On: Media and Politics in the Iraq War*, 51-65. Rowman & Littlefields Publishers, Inc., Lanham, MA
- Jørgensen, M. W. & Philips, L. 1999. *Diskursanalyse som Teori og Metode*. Roskilde Universitetsforlag, Danmark.
- Jowett, G. & O'Donnell, V. 1999. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. 3rd ed. Sage, London.
- Kamalipour, Y & Snow, N. 2004. *War, Media & Propaganda: A Global Perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, New York, NY.
- Kearns, Gerry. 2003. "Imperial Geopolitics." *A Companion to Political Geography*. (eds) Agnew, J., Mitchell, K. and Toal, G. Blackwell, Oxford. 173-187
- Kohut, A. 2007. America's Image in the World: Findings from the Pew Global Attitudes Project.
(<http://pewglobal.org/commentary/pdf/1019.pdf>) (Accessed October 2007.)
- Kvale S. 1996. *InterViews. An introduction to qualitative research writing*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA
- Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. 1985. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. Verso, London
- Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. 2001. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. 2nd ed. Verso, London
- Laclau, E. 1996. *Emancipation(s)*. Verso, London
- Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Leonard, M. 2002. *Public Diplomacy*. The Foreign Policy Centre, London.
- Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. 1989. *Fourth generation evaluation*. Sage, Newbury Park, CA
- Lord, C. 2006. *Losing Hearts and Minds? Public Diplomacy and Strategic Influence in the Age of Terror*. Praeger Security International, Westport, CT
- Lynch, M. 2006. *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today*. Colombia University Press, New York, NY.
- Miller, D. 2006. *Tell Me Lies: Propaganda and Media Distortion in the Attack on Iraq*. Ed. Pluto Press, London.
- NESH. 1994. *Forskningsetiske Retningslinjer for Samfunnsvitenskap, Jus og Humaniora*. Den Nasjonale Forskningsetiske Komité for Samfunnsfag og Humaniora, Oslo
- Neumann, I.B. 2001. *Mening, Materialitet, Makt: En Innføring i Diskursanalyse*. Fagbokforlaget, Bergen.

- Norsk Telegrambyrå (NTB) 20.10.2006. Pentagon Forsvarer Propaganda-Operasjon.
- Nye, J. S. 1990. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. Basic Books, New York, NY.
- Nye, J. S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. Public Affairs, New York, NY.
- Ó Tuathail, G. 1999. Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society. Gray, C & Sloan, G. *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy*. Frank Cass, London.
- O'Loughlin, J. 2003. Spatial Analysis in Political Geography. Agnew, J., Mitchell, K., Toal, G. (eds) *A Companion to Political Geography*. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.
- Pew Global Attitudes Project: Nine-Nation Survey. 2004. *Final Topline*, Washington D.C: The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press.
- Plaisance, P. L. 2005. The Propaganda War on Terrorism: An Analysis of the United States' Shared Values Public Diplomacy Campaign After September 11, 2001. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 20:4, 250-268.
(http://www.leaonline.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1207/s15327728jmme2004_3) (accessed December 2007)
- Public Law 402. The US Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948
- Rampton, S. & Stauber, J. 2006. *The Best War Ever. Lies, Damned Lies, and the Mess in Iraq*. Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, New York, NY.
- Rampton, S. 2007. Shared Values revisited. (<http://www.prwatch.org/node/6465>) (accessed November 2007)
- Richardson, L. 2006. *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*. Random House Publishing Group, New York, NY.
- Richardson, L. & St. Pierre, E.A. 2005. Writing: A Method of Inquiry. (eds) Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 3rd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA. 959-979
- Romarheim, A. 2005. *Crossfire of Fear: Propaganda in the US War on Terrorism*. Master's thesis. Department of Political Science, University of Oslo.
- Rugh, W.A. 2006. *American encounters with Arabs. The "Soft Power" of US Public Diplomacy in the Middle East*. Praeger Security International, Westport, CT, USA.
- Satloff, R. 2004. *The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror. Essays on US Public Diplomacy in the Middle East*. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington D.C.
- Saunders, F.S. 2001. *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. Granta Books, London.
- Schmitt, E & T. Schanker, July 26, 2005 U.S. Officials Retool Slogan for Terror War.
(<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/26/politics/26strategy.html?ex=1280030400&en=88ee52ec58c1ca68&ei=5088>) (accessed December 2007)
- Snow, N. 2002. *Propaganda, Inc.: Selling America's culture to the world*. 2nd ed. Seven stories Press, New York, NY.
- Snow, N. 2003. *Information War: American Propaganda, Free Speech and Opinion Control since 9/11*. Seven Stories Press, New York, NY.
- Stake, R. 1995. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Stoker, K.L. & Tusinski, K.A. 2006. Reconsidering Public Relations' Infatuation With Dialogue: Why Engagement and Reconciliation Can Be More Ethical Than Symmetry and Reciprocity. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 21:2-3, 166-176.
- Telhami, S. 2002. *The Stakes: America in the Middle East. The Consequences of Power and the Choice for Peace*. Westview Press, Oxford.
- Thagaard, T. 2003. *Systematikk og innlevelse*. Fagbokforlaget, Bergen
- Thussu, D.K. 2005. Selling Neo-Imperial Conflicts: Television and US Public Diplomacy. *Mass Media and society*. Eds Curran, J. & M. Gurevitch. 4th. Ed. Arnold, London.
- U.S. Department of State Library. 1987. *Dictionary of International Relations Terms*. 3rd ed. Dept. of State Library, Washington, D.C.
- US Department of State. 2002. *Shared Values Initiative*.
(<http://www.osutulsa.okstate.edu/sharedvalues/commercials.aspx>) (Accessed September 2007)
- Walt, S.W. 1987. *The Origins of Alliances*. Cornell University Press, London.

- Wells, L. 11 July, 2007 Statement Before the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities and House Armed Services Committee On “Strategic Communications and the Battle of Ideas: Winning the Hearts and Minds in the Global War against Terrorists”.
- Yin, R.K. 2002. *Case Study Research, Design and Methods*. 3rd ed. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA
- Young, K.G. 1987. *Taleworlds and Storyrealms*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht, The Netherlands
- Zogby, J. 2002. *What Arabs Think: Values, Beliefs and Concerns*. Zogby international, Washington D.C.

Number of words including references: 40,147.

APPENDICES

- I. List of informants
- II. Project Proposal for Interviewees
- III. Shared Values Initiative Transcript

APPENDIX I: LIST OF INFORMANTS

Public diplomacy perpetrators

Alan Kotok, interview 16 February 2007

Alan Kotok is a former USIA employee and managing editor of science magazine and the editor of USIA Alumni Association's webpage publicdiplomacy.org.

Alberto Fernandez, interview 28 February 2007

Alberto M. Fernandez was Director for Public Diplomacy for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in the US State Department between July 2005 and June 2007. As a career Foreign Service Officer, he served in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2003, and has previously served in Jordan, Guatemala, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and the United Arab Emirates. He speaks Arabic.

Bruce Gregory, interview 2 March 2007

Bruce Gregory is director of the Public Diplomacy Institute at The George Washington University. He was a member of the Defense Science Board's 2004 Study Task Force on Strategic Communication, the Council on Foreign Relations Task Force on Public Diplomacy, the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs, and the Public Diplomacy Council. He has served as coordinator on the Department of State's Response to Terrorism Coalition Working Group on Public Diplomacy and as the State Department executive secretary on the Defense Science Board's 2001 Task Force on Managed Information Dissemination.

Richard Schmierer, interview 1 March 2007

Richard Schmierer is a State Department Foreign Service Officer. He served at the headquarters of the U.S. Information Agency between 1988 and 1992, first as the head of the Middle East office of the International Visitor Program, and later in the Agency's Office of European Affairs. Between 2004 and 2005 he served as Embassy Counsellor for Public Affairs in Baghdad, Iraq. He joined the staff of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy in Washington D.C. in August 2005.

William A. Rugh, interview 26 February 2007

William A. Rugh was a US Foreign Service Officer 1964-1995, serving in Washington and at seven Middle Eastern diplomatic posts including public affairs officer in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. He is currently an Associate of Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, an Adjunct Scholar at the Middle East Institute, a Trustee of the American University in Cairo, and a Board Member at AMIDEAST. Rugh is the author of *Arab Mass Media* (2004) and *American Encounters with Arabs* (2006).

David Henry and Petter Næss, interview 14 January 2007

David Henry and Petter Næss work for the American Embassy of Norway. David Henry is a Political Economic Officer and covers environment, agriculture, fishery and public outreach. Petter Næss has worked at the embassy and the US Information Service for a total of 20 years.

Sideline Critics

Barry Zorthian, interview 27 February 2007

Barry Zorthian is a retired Foreign Service Officer who has worked for Voice of America, for the US Information Services and for the private sector with broadcasting. He was also responsible for media relations during the Vietnam War.

Today, he is a sideline critic of public diplomacy.

John H. Brown, interview 23 February 2007

John H Brown is a former Foreign Service Officer who resigned his post when the war in Iraq was launched, because he feared it would have negative consequences for public diplomacy.

He currently teaches courses in public diplomacy at Georgetown University and University of Southern California, and is an active blogger on the subject.

Principal Critics

Chris Toensing, interview 26 February 2007

Chris Toensing is the editor of Middle East report by the organisation Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP). He has written critical articles about public diplomacy, such as "Never too soon to say goodbye to HI".

John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton, interview 12 February 2007

John Stauber is the founder of the non-profit, non-partisan Center for Media & Democracy (CMD) and its newsmagazine PR Watch in Madison, Wisconsin. Sheldon Rampton is the research director of CMD. Together, they have written the books *Weapons of Mass Deception* (2003), *The best war ever* (2006), *Toxic sludge is good for you* (2004) and *Banana Republicans* (2004). Their approach to public diplomacy and propaganda is critical analysis and activism.

Lauren Miller, interview 12 February 2007

Lauren Miller worked for the Center for Media and Democracy from 2000-2006 as the editor for PR Watch, and wrote a chapter on public diplomacy in *Toxic sludge is good for you* (2004) by Rampton & Stauber. Now she is working for the listener sponsored community radio WORT in Madison, Wisconsin.

Nancy Snow, telephone interview 8 March 2007

Nancy Snow is a communications scholar at University of Southern California. She is a previous USIA employee and has written critical books and articles about public diplomacy, such as *Propaganda, Inc.* (2002) and *Information War* (2003).

APPENDIX II: PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR INTERVIEWEES

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department for sociology and
human geography

Project proposal of Master's thesis **Anja Sletteland**

Marketing democracy: **American public diplomacy for the prevention of Arab and Muslim hostility**

The USA's declining popularity in the Arab and Muslim world is often understood as a threat to American security. After September 11, 2001, a range of efforts have been made to persuade potentially hostile Muslims and Arabs that the USA is not waging war on Islam, but on terrorism. This "war of ideas", as it is called, construes a positive image of the USA directed to the target audience of popular culture. In the war against terrorism, there is an increasing demand for extended use of 'soft power' like dialogue and persuasion instead of military attacks. Still, the strategy of using public diplomacy remains controversial. Many efforts to win hearts and minds have been ridiculed in the international press and claimed to have contributed to the growing anti-Americanism in the Arab and Muslim world. This controversy has put the public diplomacy strategy against terrorism in the contradictory position of necessity and impossibility. The purpose of the master's thesis is to explore the discourses of American anti-terrorism public diplomacy.

I will analyse the discourses of public diplomacy on two levels. Firstly, I will analyse how public diplomacy professionals construct, and try to convey to the Arab and Muslim world, an alternative relationship between the US and its opponents. The intention of this re-mapping of identities and interests is to counter anti-American sentiment and shift the focus to shared values and interests. Secondly, I will analyse the discourse *about* American anti-terrorism public diplomacy, in other words, the debates on the subject. This debate is nuanced and structured by a range of arguments. I want to examine the status of different arguments in the development of public diplomacy strategies. What I want to find out in the master's thesis are three things: Firstly, how different public diplomacy efforts explain the USA's role in the world; secondly, why American anti-terrorism public diplomacy is so controversial, and thirdly, how the controversy contributes to the development of the concept.

The empirical work will be carried out by discourse analysis and interviews. To assess the discursive practice, I will analyse some of the efforts launched as public diplomacy since September 11, 2001. Amongst these are the advertisement campaign Shared Values Initiative from 2002. I also hope to get access to newer campaigns launched by Under Secretary of

State for public diplomacy and public affairs Karen Hughes, which claim to emphasize the dialogical aspect of public diplomacy. I will analyse how these campaigns represent USA and American values. To analyse the controversy of the concept, I will interview perpetrators and critics of public diplomacy. The interview material will reveal the variety of arguments structuring the discourse, how public diplomacy professionals perceive their own practice and how they relate to the controversy of the subject. Further, I will analyse how ideas about public diplomacy are caught up by political practice.

I will interview persons who have been involved in the discourse about public diplomacy since September 11, 2001. This period has been characterised by intense debate and many shifts. Many critics relate to public diplomacy as if critical voices are completely neglected by the State Department and public diplomacy professionals. My impression is that this is far from the truth, and I would like to assess the effect of the criticism for the development of public diplomacy strategies. Therefore, I would like to interview critics as well as perpetrators of public diplomacy.

What I would like to find out with the interviews, is indicated by the following questions:

1. A recurring motto of American public diplomacy is “telling our story”. What is this story about?
2. How can public diplomacy contribute to American security in the war on terror?
3. Which role do the critics play in the development of public diplomacy strategies?

The ambition of the master’s thesis is to provide knowledge about the diverging opinions on the subject of public diplomacy. This knowledge could contribute to more considerate strategies of public diplomacy in the future, for a more humane and enduring war against terrorism.

APPENDIX III

Transcript of the Shared Values Initiative televisions spots

This appendix contains a transcription of the SVI television campaign, copied from Fullerton and Kendricks' book *Advertising's War on Terrorism: The Story of the US State Department Shared Values Initiative* (2006). To view the actual spots, visit <http://www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/sharedvalues/>.

Film Spot 1: Baker



I believe the American people in general respect the Islamic faith. Muslims can practice their faith in totality here.



Hello my name is Abdul Hammuda, I am the owner of Tiger Lebanese bakery located here in Toledo, Ohio, the United States of America. We make the greatest pita bread in the nation. I was born and raised in Tripoli, Libya. I came to America to go to school.



After I graduated I really saw the great opportunity this country would have for me as a businessman. My wife is my right hand person.



My name is Shadia Hammuda. We are making mujaddara. It is lentil and rice with onion.

Film spot 1: Baker (Continued)



The bakery was a much smaller place than you see today and I introduce some dishes from the African nation of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, and that's how we grew.



My name is Ahmad Hammuda, I am studying pharmacy at the University of Toledo.



I have been very fortunate to have my children with me at the bakery.



My name is Leena Hammuda, I am a registered junior at the Toledo Islamic Academy.

Film Spot 1: Baker (Continued)



The Toledo Islamic Academy is the Islamic school, the first of its kind in the state of Ohio, and I was one of the co-founders of the school. We started with about fifty students, now we are from pre-k to high school.



Religious freedom here is something very important, and we see it practiced and no one ever bothered us. Living the straight path in America, I don't think is hard because it is a choice you have to make.



Since 9/11 we've had an overwhelming sense of support from our customers and clients.



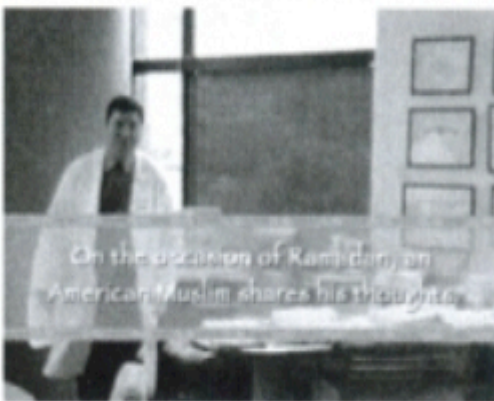
America is a land of opportunity, of equality. We are happy to live here as Muslims and preserve our faith.

Presented by the Council of
American Muslims for Understanding

Film Spot 2: Doctor



There is a profound connection between medicine and Islam.



On the occasion of Ramadan, an American Muslim shares his thoughts.

I mean through knowledge, you can improve not just medicine, but a lot of men.



Dr. E. Zerhouni

My name is Dr. Zerhouni, I am the Director of the National Institute of Health in America, and I have been nominated to this position by President George Bush.



The mission of the National Institute of Health is to advance knowledge about the medical care and diseases that affect mankind.

Film Spot 2: Doctor (Continued)



There are eighteen thousand people working here in Washington and there are forty five thousand projects that the Institute funds throughout the world. When we develop a new treatment it is available worldwide, so it impacts on the health of everyone on earth.



I was born in Algeria, on the western side of Algeria in a small town called Nedroma. I became very interested in medicine because I had an uncle who was actually a radiologist. Well, I came in America in 1975. I was totally embraced by people here, my professors. You know, everybody told me we are all immigrants here, we are all from different places, and we all melt together and I love that, I really do.



The notion that science can improve health has been borne out in Islam for many centuries. Some of the best doctors in the history of the world have been Muslim doctors.



What I can tell Muslims around the world is the tolerance and support I've received myself is remarkable. I don't think that there is any other country in the world, where I think different people from different countries are accepted and welcomed as members of the society, as good citizens.

Film Spot 3: Teacher



I decided to become a teacher because I enjoy talking to the kids, working with the children, more than anything.



My name is Rawia Ismail. I am a school teacher in public school in the United States of America.



I wear a hijab in the classroom where I teach. Children ask me a lot of questions. I've never had any child that thought it was weird or anything like that, and they like the fact, both them and their parents, that they are introduced to different culture.



I was born in Lebanon, in Beirut, Lebanon. We came to the United States in '84. Islam in the United States could be followed just as well as I can follow in my village where I was raised.

Film Spot 3: Teacher (Continued)



In general it's very practical to practice Islam and live in U.S. My neighbors, they are fair minded and good people. So they are – they understand us.



I also teach my children in Saturday school, Islamic school. I teach the kids about an hour of religion and an hour of Arabic, and they have some lunch in between, and then we all do prayers together. This is something that I found to be an important way of life to me and my family. In my neighborhood all the non-Muslims, I see that they care a lot about their children's education, just as much as I do and about family values.



My neighbors have always been supportive, truly. I didn't quite see any prejudice anywhere in my neighborhood after the September 11.



I had to work at getting the kids to understand that most important that we should work on our similarities rather than our differences.

Film Spot 4: Journalist



To become a journalist, of course, you have to uphold truth. You have to be honest and you have to be objective, and all those values I've already learned. Hi, I am Devianti Faridz. I am a Master's student majoring in broadcast journalism at the University of Missouri in the United States. I was born in Bandung, Indonesia.



The values of Islam that I have been taught ever since I was a child are the values that I have been exposed to here at school – honesty, truth, knowledge.



KOMU-TV is related to the University of Missouri. A majority of the students work as reporters, producers or anchors for news breaks here. So, while I am learning I can also work at a real television station. It is stressful, but that's part of the training. (Faridz on television: Good Morning I am Devianti Faridz, thanks for waking up with us.)



I am fortunate that I live in Columbia, Missouri, where there is a mosque. That enables me to gather with my Muslim friends and pray together, celebrate religious holidays together. So far the American students that I have met have respected my beliefs.

Film Spot 4: Journalist (Continued)



(Faridz on television: Nine miners have been trapped since Wednesday night.)



I hope to be able to go back home to Indonesia and become an objective journalist who can contribute to the betterment of society. We should embrace diversity and differences, and not be afraid of them.



It is nice to know that Americans are willing to understand more about Islam, and there is an opportunity for mutual understanding.

Film Spot 5: Fire fighter



You get the call, you go. The job is about helping other people. They are relying on us and we are the first ones to help them right away. I am a paramedic for a fire department of New York.



I am a volunteer chaplain with the MT Police department. Those who are putting their lives on the line each and every day to protect the citizens of this nation. It is my responsibility to do whatever I can, whether that is offering counseling or spiritual guidance or words of acknowledgement of the hard work that they are doing.



I have co-workers who are Jewish, Christian, Hindu even, all different faiths. We get along fine. You know, we treat each other with respect. They have all been supportive of me since the 9/11 attack and I have been very grateful for that.

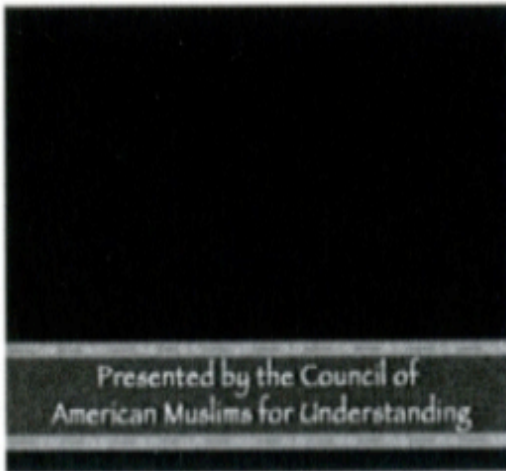


I have never gotten disrespected because I am a Muslim.

Film Spot 5: Fire fighter (continued)



I think Muslims in America have more freedom to work for Islam perhaps more than any other country that I have visited.



We are all brothers and sisters and here I am as a human taking care of another.

